Bush considering Green Berets to fight Abu Sayyaf

Story below, Col. 2

GI falls for Pinay, deserts US Army

MAKE LOVE NOT WAR

By Blanche S. Rivera

IT DOESN'T pay for an American serviceman to be love-struck at a time when the United States is gearing up for war.

A lovesick American airman who deserted

GI FALLS/A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Peso breaches P54; speculators warned

By Clarissa S. Batino and Elena R. Torrijos

THE GOVERNMENT warned it would come down hard on currency speculators after the peso dropped to P54.10 to the dollar in morning trade yesterday—the lowest since July 2001.

The treasury chief of a large universal

PESO/A15

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Saturday, February 8, 2003 ★★ 70 pages / 8 sections / vol. 18 / no. 62 P15
website: www.inq7.net

US edges closer to war

101st airborne 'Screaming Eagles' on way to Gulf

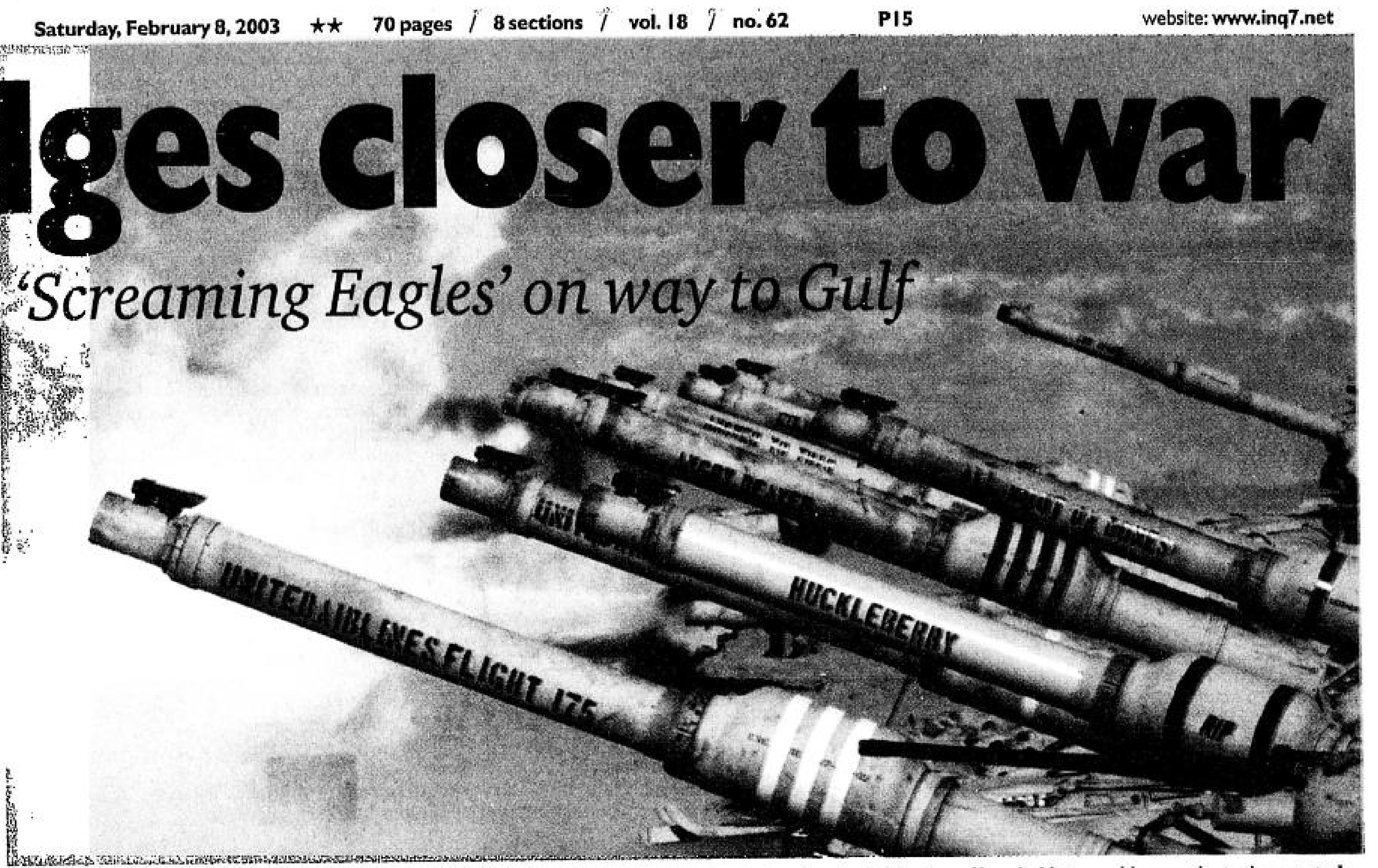
EDGING closer to war, the United States yesterday dispatched its elite 101st Airborne Division to the Gulf region. "A deployment order has been signed," said John Minton, spokesperson for the famous division nicknamed the "Screaming Eagles."

The 101st Airborne, whose World War II exploits were featured in the HBO series "Band of Brothers," played a key role in routing Iraqi ground forces in the 1991 Gulf War. Its deployment will push the number of US troops in the Middle East to almost 130,000. The US contingent is expected to reach well over 200,000 troops.

In January 1991, the 101st Airborne division launched a massive helicopter-borne assault deep into Iraq, helping to isolate Iraqi forces and drive them from Kuwait in a ground conflict that lasted just 100 hours. The division, which was also deployed in Afghanistan last year, did not suffer a single casualty.

In Baghdad, however, officials tried to woo the United Nations by announcing the first private interview of one of its scientists by disarmament experts. Presidential adviser Amer al-Saadi disclosed that inspectors were inter-

US/A17



IN THE LINE of fire: US Army fires live rounds during a training session on Thursday near the Iraqi border in Northern Kuwait. Note markings on the tank-mounted cannons. The US military continues its buildup of forces throughout the Persian Gulf with more than 150,000 troops expected to be in place next week. GETTY IMAGES

Guingona, Roco urge GMA: Back UN, not US

ON THE BEACH, US Marines practice mounting mortar during the RP-US Marine Inter-operability Exercise 03 in Ternate, Cavite. About 1,300 Filipino and American troopers participate in the event on Friday. DENNIS SABANGAN

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday continued to draw heavy fire for her hawkish stance on the US-Iraq crisis.

Raul Roco, who plans to seek the presidency in 2004, said Ms Macapagal should back, not the US attack mode, but the position of the United Nations.

"It is right to support the [UN] precisely because 'the Philippines renounces war as an instrument of national policy,'" Roco said in a letter he sent the President through Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo. "Our advocacy must adhere to that principle. Otherwise, only the mighty will be right."

At a news conference, Vice President Teofisto Guingona deplored Ms Macapagal's announcement Thursday that she was convinced of the presence in Iraq of "weapons of mass destruction," saying it was merely an echo of the position of US President George W. Bush.

He also said that while the President might not be advocating a US-led attack, the statements she had made since her meeting with US Army chief Gen. Eric Shinseki gave "the impression that the Philippines associates itself with the impending attack."

Guingona maintains that any military action on Iraq should be backed by a resolution from the UN Security Council.

Sen. Joker Arroyo caustically noted that the country had received nothing in exchange for its "canine devotion to the Bush doctrine" except a US Department of State advisory for US citizens not to travel to the Philippines "because we harbor terrorists."

"What national interest is served by the President's policy statements that hew closely to the Bush doctrine on Iraq? None whatsoever. On the contrary, it has not benefited us any," Arroyo said.

GUINGONA/A17

Former NPA rebel's baby is GMA's 101st godchild

By Carlito Pablo

TAKING time out from her official duties, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday motored to the V. Luna military hospital in Quezon City to visit her newest godchild, her 101st.

Sheena Rose was born Thursday to 22-year-old Rosalinda Cocoy, whom the President met in November. The circumstances of that meeting were anything but ordinary.

Cocoy was a New People's Army rebel, six months pregnant, and one of 150 communist surrenderers presented to Ms Macapagal by Col. Efren Orbon, commander of the Army's 202nd Brigade, in ceremonies held in Baras, Rizal.

At that meeting, the President told Cocoy: "I'll be the godmother of your child."

Cocoy was no ordinary rebel either. According to the Armed Forces, she was the "secretary" or "political officer" of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA in Rizal province.

Yesterday, hours before the

FORMER/A15

Bush considering Green Berets to fight Abus

By Jennie L. Ilustre
PDI Washington correspondent

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush is reportedly considering a plan to authorize American troops, starting with 24 Green Berets, to fight alongside Filipino soldiers against the Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has reportedly approved the plan that calls for the initial combat deployment of four six-member Green Beret teams, according to the report "Bush set to approve terror combat mission in Philippines" that ran in the Feb. 4 issue of the Congress Daily newspaper, a politically influential broadsheet published twice daily. The paper covers Capitol Hill.

George C. Wilson, a former military reporter of The Washington Post, cited senior administration officials in writing the report. Wilson has "good sources at the Pentagon," sources in Congress told the INQUIRER.

Lt. Commander Jeff Davis, spokesperson of the Pentagon, told the INQUIRER on Feb. 5 that "no decision has been made to conduct any mission beyond the security assistance program and the military-to-military training exercises."

But in reply to a question, he said: "Sure, that could change" in the future.

BUSH/A15

THE REMAINS of the first Israeli astronaut, Ilan Ramon, who was on the space shuttle Columbia, are borne by a US Air Force Honor Guard on arrival at the Dover Air Force base in Delaware. The Columbia disintegrated on reentry on Feb. 1 killing all seven astronauts. AFP/NASA

Sulu's 1st Siamese twins inspire interfaith caring

By Fe Zamora
Inq7.net

FE ZAMORA

TZU, CHI, which mean relief and compassion, are "healthy babies."

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The first Siamese twins from Sulu have inspired an interfaith—Buddhist, Muslims, Catholics, Christian—solidarity to save their lives.

Only 17 days old, Fatima Zhinshiela and Fatima Chinshiela are nicknamed Tzu and Chi after the Tzu Chi Foundation, a Taiwan-based Buddhist group that has been conducting medical missions in Basilan. A medical team from the foundation will arrive in Manila today to examine the twins.

Tzu and Chi, together with their Muslim parents, will be flown to Manila by the PAL Foundation to meet the Buddhist medical team.

Born on Jan. 20 to an 18-year-old Muslim mother from Patikul, Sulu, the girls are joined from the chest down to the belly; the stump of a common umbilical cord hangs precariously at the conjoined torso.

Otherwise, the twins have the

SULU'S/A15

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/08/03

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FrontPage

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

IN CASE OF WAR IN IRAQ

Reds, Abus threaten revenge attacks

COMMUNIST rebels yesterday vowed to launch sympathy attacks if the United States were to carry out its threat to strike Iraq.

"We can help shield Iraq by voicing opposition to the US war and vigorously opposing the government's all-out puppetry," Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio Rosal said in a statement.

Rosal said the CPP's 9,000-member armed wing, the New People's Army, "will contribute to this effort by launching tactical offensives" against the military and police to weaken the Macapagal administration.

He criticized President Macapagal for "unabashedly supporting Bush's jingoism" and her alleged plan "to allow the US to use (Philippine) soil as a launching pad" for aggression.

The communist threat came on the heels of warnings raised by a Muslim leader in Mindanao on Thursday of retaliatory actions by fundamentalist Muslim Filipinos against US interests in the Philippines to avenge any deaths caused by the impending US-led assault on Iraq.

Yesterday, Jose Ramirez, aka Hamsiraji Sali, a Basilan-based leader of the Abu Sayyaf bandit gang claimed to have mobilized some of his men in Metro Manila and in the key cities of Mindanao with orders to launch attacks as soon as America starts a war on Iraq.

Ramirez, who said Iraq had "helped us a lot," warned that if Ms Macapagal does not change her mind about supporting the US "we will create trouble in the Philippines."

Various religious groups yesterday called on Iraq leader Saddam Hussein to cooperate with United Nations inspectors and for the US not to start war without UN approval.

They held an interfaith prayer rally to seek divine intervention to avert a "global war" arising from attacks by US forces and its allies on Iraq.

In a prayer prepared by a panel from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, prayer leaders called on all world leaders to "settle their differences by international law, by honest dialogue" and "noble exercise of diplomacy."

The interfaith prayer rally, held at the Rizal Park open air auditorium, brought together Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Bahai and other religious groups, as well as lay Catholic groups. Philip Ella Juico, chair of the National Social Action Council, represented the government.

Ramirez said that one of the possible targets of his men would be "big establishments."

The Abu Sayyaf has been blamed for a series of mall explosions in the cities of Zamboanga and General Santos last year.

"I sent men to Davao, Manila, Cagayan de Oro, Cotabato, Zamboanga, Dadiangas (General Santos)," he said.

Ramirez said nobody was sent to the Visayas "because we have many friends and companions there."

But Southern Command chief Lt. General Narciso Abaya laughed off Ramirez's claim.

Abaya said he could not imagine how Ramirez can send his men out of Basilan when his group was constantly on the run.

However, he admitted that more security was being provided for the US troops in the city.

Task Force Zamboanga commander Col. Alexander Yapching said more soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division in Zamboanga del Sur had been sent to beef up security for US troops participating in the ongoing joint US-Philippine training exercises in Mindanao.

In Davao City, the Southern Mindanao police said it has stepped up security following reports that groups, probably allied with the Abu Sayyaf, were planning to launch attacks in Panabo City in Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley province and Davao Oriental.

Some of the identified bomb targets were the Panabo Wharf and the Stanfilco Banana Co.

The government also warned this week that groups sympathetic to Iraq could mount terrorist action in the Philippines.

"We are not discounting the possibility of extremist-led terrorist attacks, not only in the US but in other countries as well," Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said on Thursday.

He said "the military and our law enforcement agencies have also been bracing for this by beefing up intelligence and police presence as well as community vigilance in urban areas." *AFP with reports from Julie S. Alipala and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Armand N. Nocum*

Food blockade failed, say hog raisers

By Volt Contreras and Christine A. Gaylican

AGRICULTURE Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. said yesterday prices of pork in Metro Manila have remained stable despite the "food blockade" thrown up by local swine raisers to protest the importation and smuggling of meat products that have flooded the market.

The Luzon-based Agricultural Sector Alliance of the Philippines led by the Limcoma Multipurpose Cooperative in Batangas admitted the meat blockade was not working.

Limcoma president Nicanor Briones said the blockade, meant to hinder meat supplies to Metro Manila wet markets, was failing because the Department of Agriculture was working with commercial hog raisers to continue delivering meat supplies.

Monitoring of 24 public markets in Manila showed no changes in the price of pork. As of yesterday, prime cuts such as *liempo* and *pigue* were selling at P100 to P120 per kilo.

The 24 markets monitored were in Alabang, Baclaran, Blumentritt, Central Market, Cloverleaf, Divisoria, Edsa Central, Quiapo, Paco and Pasig.

The INQUIRER's own survey showed pork at the UP wet market in Quezon City being sold for P115-P120 per kilo, the same price before the two-day-old blockade.

Ramon Castro, 37, said he continued to get his supply of "local pork" from a dealer at Nepa-Q Mart, also in Quezon City.

"While 70 percent of local hog raisers share their complaint, only about 20 percent are taking part (in the blockade)," Lorenzo said in a phone interview.

The blockade is on its third and final day.

While downplaying the blockade's impact, Lorenzo was quick to add that the complaints raised by the protesters "are being addressed one by one."

Lorenzo also warned food retailers against taking advantage of a possible US war with Iraq by unduly raising their prices.

"We have posted warnings for food retailers not to take advantage of consumers or the government will go after them," he told reporters in Bacolod City yesterday.

Lorenzo said that even if war broke out, the public had no reason to panic because "there is more than enough food for everybody."

"If prices begin to go up, (the President) might have to take certain things into account to make sure that the prices are... rolled back," he said. *With Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

JDV vows passage of dirty-money law

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE AMENDMENTS to the Anti-Money Laundering Law will be passed by House and the Senate, reconciled in a bicameral conference committee and signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo in time for the Wednesday deadline set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said.

"We will have it by Feb. 12, just like the last time (when) we passed it on the day itself," he said.

The President signed the Anti-Money Laundering Act into law last year just hours before the FATF deadline was to lapse.

'Loopholes'

But the FATF, the Paris-based anti-money laundering watchdog of industrialized countries, has pointed out what it described as "glaring loopholes" in the law and wants Congress to introduce changes that should be in place by Feb. 12.

Failure to meet the deadline would subject the country to financial sanctions from FATF member countries which could hold up the dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers.

"It's as good as done," De Venecia told reporters on Thursday just as the House was forced to adjourn its extended session for lack of a quorum.

In a phone interview yesterday, the Speaker said that if the Senate also approved the amendments on Monday, a bicameral conference committee could be convened on Tuesday. Once approved by the bicameral committee, the measure would be submitted for ratification in the two chambers, a clean copy of the act printed overnight and then signed into law by the President.

He said the amendments sought by the FATF, particularly the lowering of the deposit threshold that banking regulators may inspect from P4 million, would be the priority when House sessions resume on Monday.

"But in our rush to approve it, we should not prejudice the more than 40 Filipino banks whose depositors are transferring to American and European banks because of the publicity (generated by the proposed amendments)," he said.

De Venecia said marathon morning and evening sessions would be conducted if necessary.

Farmers blocs back rice import scheme

SEVERAL of the country's largest agricultural groups yesterday expressed support for the government's rice importation program for farmers and defended the National Food Administration from allegations it was favoring the Binondo rice cartel.

The National Confederation of Irrigators Association (NCIA), in a press briefing, also called on a party-list Rep. Benjamin Cruz to work with the NFA and other farmers groups to improve government's rice import programs for farmers.

They urged Cruz to open a constructive dialogue with the industry on the NFA, particularly its move for farmers to be the sole importers of the country's rice needs.

The NCIA is an umbrella organization of farmers groups spread all over the country. With some 820,000 members, NCIA covers an estimated 65 percent of the rice farmers' sector, said NCIA president Amador Duleg.

The farmers' representatives said they were forced to speak out to correct the impression that Cruz spoke for the majority of rice farmers when he accused NFA Administrator Arthur Yap of favoring a Binondo rice cartel in the rice importation program for farmers.

Cruz has claimed the NFA under Yap was biased against small groups because of the requirements for the farmers to reserve their import allocations with the NFA on a "first-come-first served basis," and to compel them to open letters of credit (L/Cs) through the Land Bank of the Philippines.

'ALL FOR JUAN . . .'

RP needs a doctor, Flavier backers say

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

THE COUNTRY is sick and needs a doctor very quick.

Supporters of Sen. Juan Flavier, most of them hailing from the Ilocos region, yesterday launched a movement to push his bid for the presidency in 2004, saying the senator doctor was "the only one who can heal the wounds and illnesses of society."

Flavier, a physician and a former health secretary, acknowledged that he knew some of the personalities behind the "Bayanihan ni Juan Movement" but clarified that it was a private initiative.

"This is just a 'floating' exercise and it's not the campaign yet. But you cannot prevent them," Flavier said in an interview.

The group, whose slogan is "All for Juan, Juan for All," is led by lawyer Raul Lambino, a former chief of staff of Sen. Loren Legarda and Speaker Jose de Venecia. It also includes businessmen, doctors and lawyers from Ilocano-speaking provinces.

Flavier explained that private people organizing themselves into movements in support of "presidentiables" was part of a "floating exercise" that political parties do to gauge the chances of their bets.

These endorsements served to raise the public's awareness of a candidate and helped to push him or her up in the surveys, he said.

The administration has been scrambling to groom a candidate for 2004 after President Macapagal-Arroyo declared she would not be contesting the election. Among those whose names are being floated by the ruling Lakas-CMD are Flavier, Legarda, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Sen. Robert Barbers and Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

"If anybody among us tops the surveys, he or she will be it. But if we all fare poorly, the alternative is to get Roco," Flavier said.

Former Education Secretary Raul Roco, head of the Aksyon Demokratiko party which is allied with Lakas in the People Power Coalition, has consistently topped surveys of possible presidential candidates. Roco has been endorsed by Reporma and Promdi, two other PPC coalition members.

Flavier said he knew Lambino but had never worked with him. Flavier is from Baguio City and Lambino from Pangasinan.

Lambino, in a news conference, said Flavier was "winnable" and "well-loved by people" who still remember him for his track record as health secretary during the Ramos administration.

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JV files case vs dad's prosecutors

By Mathew Murphy

SAN Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito yesterday filed charges with the Ombudsman against state prosecutors for allegedly illegally obtaining information from his bank account to use. in the plunder case against his father, deposed president Joseph Estrada.

Seven members of the special prosecution panel have been named as respondents in Ejercito's complaint for violations of the Bank Deposit Secrecy Law, Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, the Revised Penal Code and the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

Ejercito said he did not really expect his complaint to prosper under Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, who heads the prosecution team.

"We just want to make this on record," he said. "But if there will be a change of administration—and I'm sure there will be—maybe we will finally get justice."

Named as respondents were government lawyers Robert E. Kallos, Dennis M. Villa-Ignacio, Humphrey T. Monteroso, Antonio T. Manzano, Raymundo O. Olaguer, John I.C. Turalba and Alexander Padilla.

Ejercito accused them of obtaining "absolutely confidential and privileged data" to support their request for a subpoena of documents on his account with the defunct Urban Bank, now the Export and Industry Bank.

He alleged that the special prosecution panel was in connivance with EIB personnel in releasing his private and privileged financial information.

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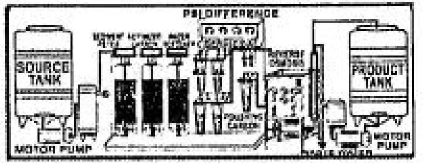

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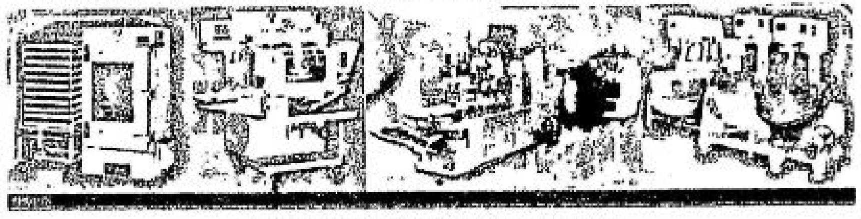

SCHEDULE OF SEMINAR

February 27 (Thursday)	10:00am	Opening Ceremonies (RIBBON CUTTING)
	10:30-12:00pm	Demonstration By: Peotraco Industries Inc.
	1:00-6:00pm	"Chinese Delicacies" By: Filipino-Chinese Bakery Association Inc. in cooperation with Edward Keller Bakels. "Elegant Wedding Cake Decorations" By: Edward Keller Philippines
February 28 (Friday)	10:00-12:00pm	Demonstration By: Peotraco Industries Inc.
	1:00-3:00pm	"Motif Cake" By: Ms. Heny Sison Penco Powdered Sugar
	3:00-6:00pm	"Australian Delight" By: Mr. David Andrews Goodman Fielder International
March 1 (Saturday)	10:00-12:00pm	Demonstration By: Peotraco Industries Inc.
	1:00-3:00pm	"A Taste of Fema" (A Baking & Cake Decorating Seminar) By: Ms. Heny Sison Fema Corporation

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49 RP fishermen arrested in Indonesia repatriated to RP

DAVAO CITY—Indonesia on Thursday repatriated the 49 fishermen, including a 15-year-old boy, arrested in Manado last month for illegal fishing.

Philippine Ambassador to Indonesia, Rafael Segis, who accompanied the fishermen, said Jakarta was not pressing charges.

"The repatriation has no conditions," Segis said.

Segis and the 49 fishermen arrived here around 4:45 p.m. on Thursday aboard a Merpati Airlines Fokker 28.

Segis said he was not able to confirm reports that the fishermen were arrested after the Indonesian Navy sank their boats off Sulawesi Island.

Earlier, Indonesian Vice Consul Johannes Maginsela said the Indonesian Navy only fired warning shots to stop the fishermen from escaping.

Manginsela said that under the United Nations law of the sea, any government has the right to examine people violating the law. He added that stern measures are applied when people are starting to escape.

"We have to enforce the law. But if they have legal rights, then there would be no problem," Manginsela said.

Segis said he has yet to get a copy of the report made by the Indonesian Navy about the incident.

"The fishermen have their own story to tell," he said.

Geronimo Arriba, boat captain and designated spokesperson of the fishermen, said the Indonesian Marines were good to them during their 16-day detention in Bitung.

He, however, said Indonesian authorities did not feed them. *Ayan C. Mellejor*

Japanese feared kidnapped

CEBU—A 70-year-old Japanese tourist has been missing for over a week and may have been kidnapped, police said Friday.

Ryohei Sato left his hotel room on the island of Mactan, off Cebu, on Jan. 30 and has not been seen since, police said.

Chief Insp. Orlando Yebra said Sato's case is being treated as a missing person, but other police officials said they did not discount that he may have been abducted.

They said that the day after Sato left his hotel, three Filipinos and a Japanese contacted the establishment to ask for his belongings, making it appear that Sato was transferring to another hotel.

But the management of the Buyong Hotel, where Sato was staying, said nobody showed up to claim his bags.

Sato is from Aizuwakamatsu in Japan's northeastern Fukushima prefecture (state). Yebra said police were trying to contact his relatives.

Last month, gunmen kidnapped a Japanese man in Mindanao and held him hostage for six days. He was released unharmed as police were preparing to rescue him. *AP*

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SHAKY 'PARTNERSHIP'

Namfrel potshots irk Comelec chief

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE MUCH-PUBLICIZED reconciliation of the Commission on Elections and its foremost critic, the watchdog National Movement for Free Elections, has turned shaky following recent conflicts over the poll agency's modernization program.

An irritated Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. went so far as to say "there is no partnership yet" between the Comelec and Namfrel in the P2.5-billion automation project.

Abalos and Namfrel officials figured in a shouting match over the poll modernization issue in front of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet in a Palace meeting early this week, according to reports.

ABALOS

Abalos said Namfrel secretary general Guillermo Luz had made it appear in his presentation that the Comelec was "bloating its budget" for the electronic transmission and consolidation of election results project, which Abalos is pushing despite a lack of funds.

Abalos had pegged the cost of electronic transmission at P800 million and the nationwide validation of voters list at around P1 billion.

He said later the Comelec would only validate registration in areas known to have padded lists to cut on cost.

Luz, on the other hand, insisted that the technology needed for electronic transmission was only around P5 million.

"That's where I took offense," Abalos said, admitting there had been "a passionate discussion... (and we got) carried away by emotion" during the presentation at Malacañang.

The Comelec chair added that Namfrel should not apply for accreditation as a citizens arm in the 2004 polls if it was not willing to support the Comelec's decisions.

"I'm not saying that all the decisions of the Comelec are right, but if they would be the citizens arm they should help implement whatever we have decided as a commission whether they agree with it or not," Abalos said.

"If you can't go along with that, then don't seek accreditation, " he said.

The Comelec wants to include electronic transmission and consolidation, as well as the validation of selected voters' lists, in the automation program for the 2004 elections.

In an executive order, the President mandated the Comelec to spend the P2.5 billion modernization fund she had pledged specifically for the acquisition of automated counting machines.

The Comelec, however, wants to lease the counting machines so it could use the savings to buy interface gadgets for the electronic transmission and data-capturing machines for validation.

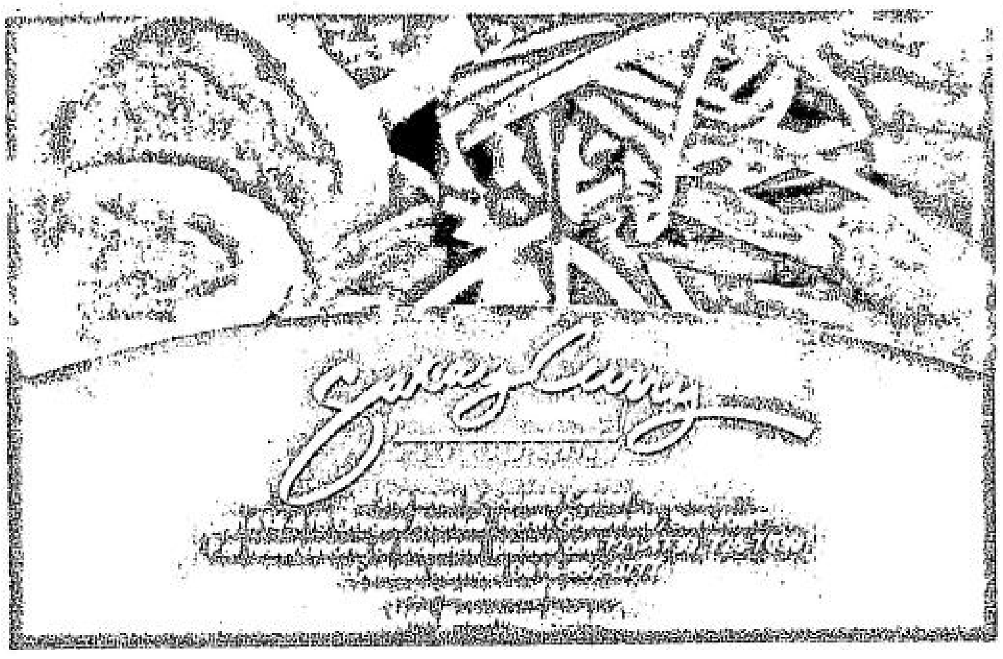
Perez lawyer named DOJ usec

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed the lawyer of resigned Justice Secretary Hernando Perez as justice undersecretary.

Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong announced this yesterday, as he welcomed the appointment of Agnes Devanadera, who was also a former mayor of a town in Quezon province.

"I am happy that the President has decided to give us another hand to help us in the dispatch of the various responsibilities in the department," Datumanong said yesterday. "If I receive the appointment papers, I'll swear her in," he said.

Datumanong said that there was no political color in Devanadera's appointment.



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Sex, stress, smoking tackled at convention

ENJOYING sex in heart disease, coping with stress and the dangers of smoking are three of seven major topics in a lay forum that is open to the public during the 8th joint annual convention of the Philippine Hypertension Society (PHS) and the Philippine Lipid Society (PLS).

The lay forum session is slated Feb. 10 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Palawan Room of the Edsa Shangrila Hotel in Mandaluyong.

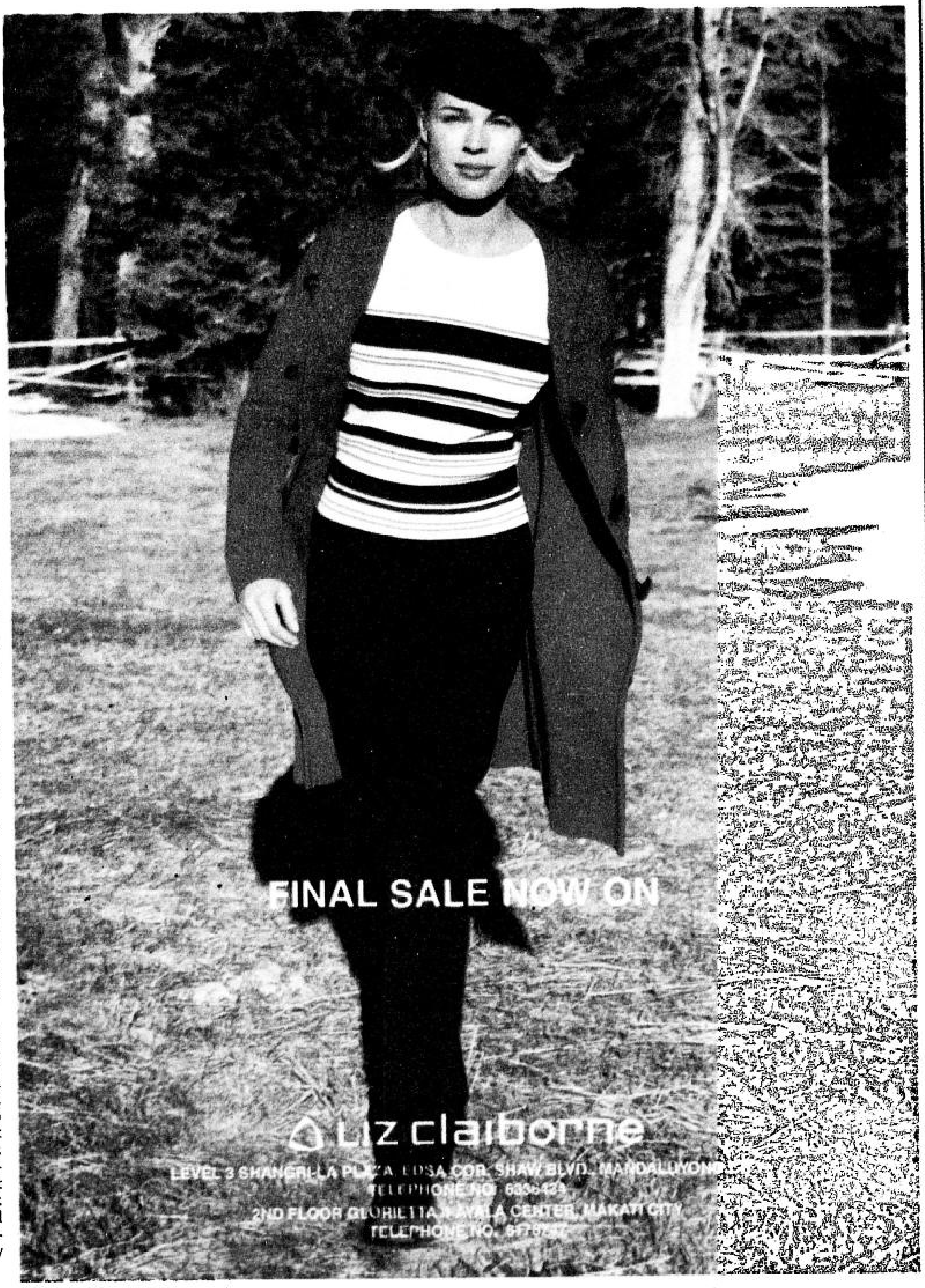
Dr. Esperanza Cabral, overall chair of the organizing committee, said the lay forum is one of several major features in the three-day convention of the country's top medical societies and professional health organizations.

The convention tackles ways to control, manage and prevent atherosclerosis, the country's No. 1 killer disease.

The topics in the lay forum:

Health Promotion—How to Improve Compliance to Lifestyle Modifications by Dr. Josefina Tuazon; Lifestyle Changes—Why smoking is dangerous to your health and how to kick the habit by Ramy Diez;

Tips on Exercise/Activity—Little things that you can do everyday by Ms. Zenaida Abanilla; Coping with Stress by Dr. Alejandro Baroque; Enjoying Sex in Heart Disease by Dr. Adolfo Bellosillo; Understanding the Patient Suffering Patient by Dr. Emilio Canonigo and The Truth Behind Alternative Medicines by Dr. Eliseo Banaynal.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OPINION

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Hawkish like Bush

EDITORIAL

THE STATEMENT of President Macapagal-Arroyo that the Philippines will not send combat troops to Iraq in the event of war represents a prudent decision. Philippine combat troops do not count for much in determining outcomes in international conflict. Besides, we don't have the resources to finance foreign military expeditions, and limited resources are better spent bolstering the economy against the shocks of a possible war.

In the post-World War II era, most of our involvement in international wars consisted of being part of the United Nations peacekeeping effort. We sent a battalion combat team during the Korean War, as part of the UN and US military action to turn back Chinese intervention in the Korean Peninsula. In the Vietnam War, we sent the Philippine Civic Action Group (Philcag) under our treaty obligation in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (Seato) during the Cold War. Philcag, an engineering battalion, was engaged mainly in civic action.

Committing Filipino troops to the Iraq theater would have been provocative to Islamic groups in the country who are antagonistic to President George W. Bush's bellicose policy on Iraq. Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago has warned of possible "sympathy attacks" by Islamic extremists on population centers in case Iraq is invaded. It should, however, be emphasized that any Muslim reaction does not mean they are being polarized along lines of a religious war. Far from being a fundamentalist state, Iraq is a secular Islamic state, and Saddam Hussein is regarded as an atheist.

The most likely participation of the Philippines in a war effort, led by the United States in a "coalition of the willing," would be in the form of clearance for overflights of US aircraft transiting to the war front and the use of other facilities to ease the flow of war supplies. The United States has not yet made such requests, although the government has agreed to consider, and most likely would approve, them.

What is, however, unsettling about President Macapagal's support of the US policy on Iraq is that it is ambiguous over where the Philippines stands in case of US military intervention without a second United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing an attack by a US-led coalition. For small states like the Philippines, its interests in international affairs are better served by working within the framework of the United Nations.

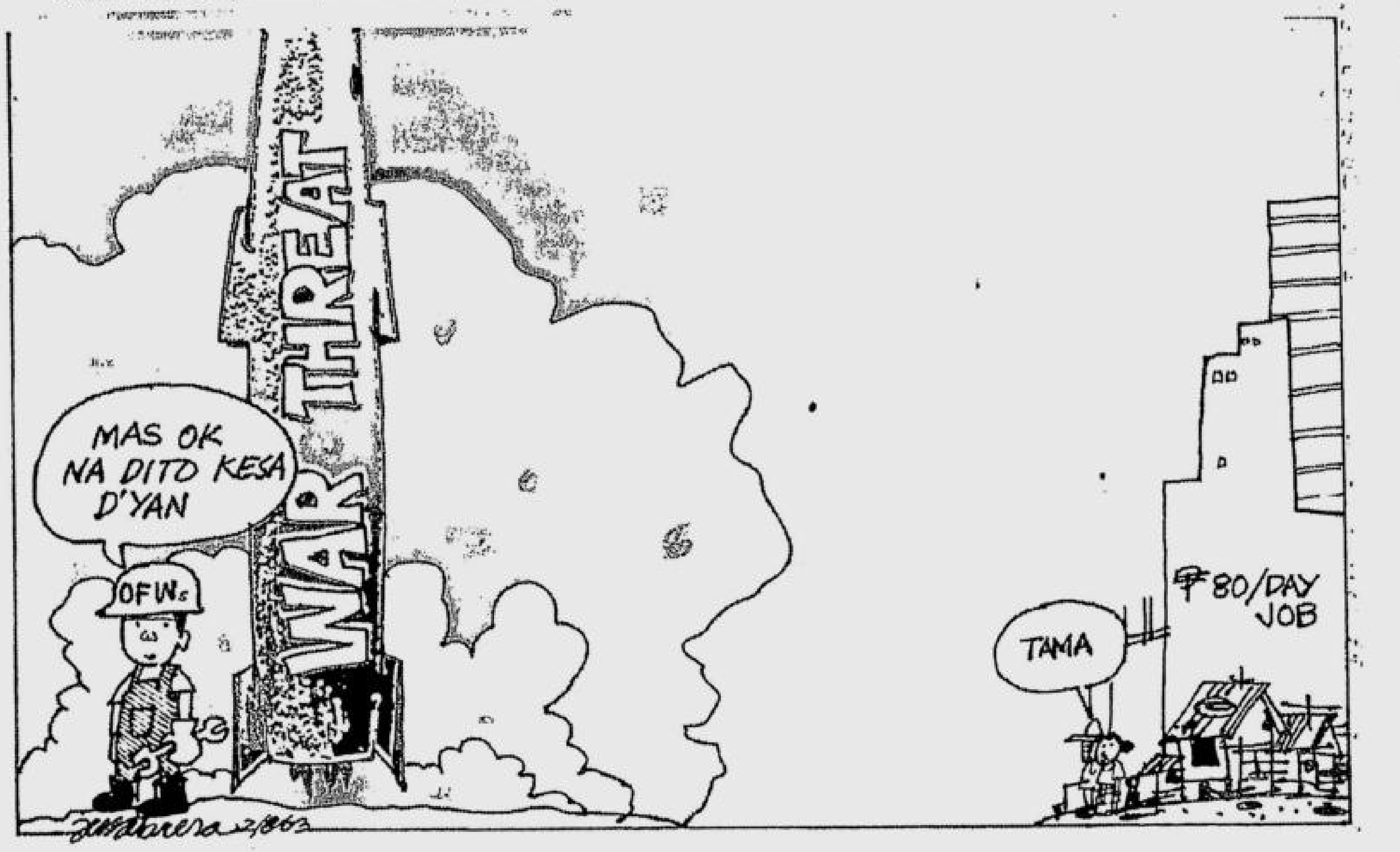
If the United States can win support for military action through a UN resolution, military intervention acquires a legitimacy that can only broaden the base of a coalition. An attack on Iraq clothed with UN legitimacy can help mute unrest from domestic Islamic radicals protesting against an invasion.

Ms Macapagal was among the first of the US allies to back the presentation of Secretary of State Colin Powell to the Security Council, laying out evidence of systematic evasion by Iraq of UN resolution 1441 calling for its disarmament. She joined the United States in stepping up pressure on Iraq to disarm, and was persuaded by Powell's presentation even though it failed to provide the "smoking gun" on Iraq's possession and production of weapons of mass destruction.

The President accepted uncritically Powell's case, saying, "We have seen the danger of having weapons of mass destruction in the hands of those who have joined the cause of terrorists." She also accepted Powell's conclusion linking Iraq to the al-Qaida terrorist network, a link which even America's staunchest ally, Britain, finds tenuous.

Following Powell's presentation, many of the US allies—notably France, Germany and Russia—want to give the UN inspectors more time to search for Iraq's hidden WMD, this time assisted by new evidence laid out by Powell. France, the fulcrum of the opposition to the rush to war, has significantly given hints that the new round of inspections should not take months but only weeks, and has demanded in strong language Iraq's full cooperation with the UN inspectors.

The Philippine government has less patience than the Europeans and is as hawkish as Bush and the hard-liners surrounding him in Washington. As far as President Macapagal is concerned, it does not matter whether military action is legitimized by a second UN resolution. Little does she realize that the best protection of small states against unilateral action of big powers lies in the UN framework.



'Amicus curiae'

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

I HAD a nice chat recently with Peter Wallace over sundry matters affecting the economic and political condition of our country. We had met on his invitation presumably for that purpose. Peter writes me every so often, as he probably also does other media people, to discuss current events here and abroad. That's part of his job as publisher of Alert, a monthly magazine circulated among the members of the diplomatic corps and the business community.

The first thing I asked him when he arrived for our appointment was his citizenship. I was curious, I said, because of his public observations of the local scene and current issues. He said he was Australian but added that he was married to a Filipino citizen and had been staying in this country for the past 28 years. I suppose these special circumstances have given him a personal stake in the Philippines and entitle him to express his views publicly on its problems. As far as I know, he has stopped short of supporting political parties and candidates.

An important topic we talked about, among many others, was the recent decision of the Supreme Court requiring Meralco to refund to its consumers a total of P10.8 billion it had illegally collected from them over the years. Speaking of the decision, Wallace says in one of his Special Reports:

"What is particularly upsetting is that it was not a clear, unequivocal situation where the legal decision was inevitable but one that is interpretive. The Justices could, it seems to us, argue the case either way. Even though by strictly legal interpretation their decision may be correct, we would argue that the law must take into account the social and economic impact of any decision made. As the whole purpose of law is to support the success of a society. In which case, consideration of the economic and social impact of the decision should form part of the decision-making process."

To this end, he suggests that "the Court invite experts (*amicus curiae*) to advise them of the economic implications of the various decisions they could make."

I have not read the Meralco ruling and cannot discuss its merits and defects at this time. Perhaps it has both, but I will await the final resolution of the Supreme Court on the pending motion for its reconsideration. I can agree, however, that the opinion of *amicus curiae* in cases requiring more than the legal expertise of the Court can be of much help to its members, who do not pretend to know everything.

As friends of the Court, experts on extra-legal matters can broaden the consideration of various issues requiring the study not only of the applicable legal principles but also of their effect on the welfare of the country. After all, laws are enacted for the general welfare in the democratic society and so should be interpreted with that purpose in mind.

Some businessmen have suggested as much but on the presumptuous sophistry that their views should be binding on the Court on the ground that they know better than its members when it comes to economic matters. In other words, the national economy is their exclusive domain. It is beyond the jurisdiction of the Court like what is known as a political question, which can be decided exclusively by others in the exercise of their discretion.

That claim is hogwash. Any case that requires the interpretation of the law, save only where the Constitution assigns that function to other agencies, comes under the jurisdiction of the courts of justice. Relevant factors that may affect a decision, like their practical effects on the common welfare, come under the jurisdiction of the courts in their determination of the applicable law. The courts may examine such implications but it is in the end the law and its meaning that will be the basis of their conclusions.

Dura lex, sed lex. The law may be hard, but it is the law. Yet the courts will make serious efforts to temper its interpretation so that it will also be just though stern. In one case, I had occasion to begin my *ponencia* thus:

"The question is sometimes asked, in serious inquiry or in curious conjecture, whether we are a court of law or a court of justice. Do we apply the law even if it is unjust or do we administer justice even against the law? Thus queried, we do not equivocate. The answer is that we do neither because we are a court *both* of law and of justice. We apply the law *with* justice for that is our mission and purpose in the scheme of our Republic."

I believe that the decision in the earlier case of Manila Prince Hotel v. GSIS, 267 SCRA 408, was wrong because it did not take into account the likelihood that reversing the results of a public bidding in favor of a losing Filipino bidder would discourage foreign investors from participating in our proceedings. The warnings of economic experts, while not mandatory but only suggestive, could have resulted in the wiser interpretation of the law *with* justice befitting our Highest Court.

I join Peter Wallace in suggesting the designation of *amicus curiae* to advise (not command) the Supreme Court in the resolution of the Meralco case.

Into the fire?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THERE seems to be a really serious effort on the part of some quarters to convince the Filipino people that a parliamentary system is the way to go. It is not clear at this point whether the advocates are pushing for the United Kingdom, German, French or other type. Moreover, nothing has as yet even been mentioned as to whether the representatives of the people are chosen by a winner-take-all system (as we practice now except for the party-list members) or by some form of proportional representation (i.e., parties getting 40 percent of the vote get 40 percent of the seats). All that seems to matter to these advocates is that the shift from presidential to parliamentary government be made.

Frankly, I doubt that the Filipino people will buy such a proposal. Not only because, as surveys show, they don't want to change the Constitution at this time; not only because, as the same surveys show, they want to be able to elect their chief executive directly, which does not generally happen in a parliamentary system; but also because, again the same surveys show, the legislature emits a pretty bad odor. The recent shenanigans in the House of Representatives with regard to the Mark Jimenez case and the Luz Tancangco case make the odor even worse.

Actually, the experience in other countries shows that it is extremely difficult (in a democratic setting, that is) to change a system of government once adopted—whether the shift is from presidential to parliamentary or vice versa. An attempt was made to shift to a parliamentary system in Brazil, for example, but the Brazilians turned the proposition down flat in a plebiscite.

Those who claim that a parliamentary system is superior should take note of the case made for a shift from parliamentary to presidential put forward by constitutional scholar Bruce Fein in the case of Turkey. Here is his description of that country's parliament at work: "...Decisiveness, however, is emphatically not the earmark of Turkey's fragmented parliamentary system featuring proportional representation, ministerial government and an anemic presidency. Glacial is the adjective that fits like a glove. Coalitions are customarily fragile. Decisions are typically semi-incremental. The bureaucracy vacillates between sclerosis and rigor mortis. Consensus takes an eternity. Public frustration climbs....With so many players partially accountable, in practical terms virtually none are at electoral time. Persons and parties blame one another for failure, but claim solo performances for successes.

"These parliamentary diseases are not unique to Turkey. They are endemic. The French Fourth Republic was a virtual revolving door of governments. Italy and Israel are notorious for collapsing ministerial coalitions. The symptoms are alleviated where two parties dominate parliament, as in Germany and Great Britain. But the weakness of collective accountability remains: namely, when many are accountable for success or failure, no one is. And that fosters irresponsibility or lethargy."

Moral: Judging from Fein's description, the Philippines may be going from the frying pan into the fire by adopting a parliamentary system.

Let it not be said, though, that in the Philippines, the presidential form of government will be chosen merely because of inertia, having been foisted on us long ago by our American masters. A strong case does exist for it, so those who think that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence should again sit up and take notice.

Noted author John Lutz has this to say: "As political scientist Arend Lijphart has asserted, a presidential system holds two important advantages over a parliamentary one: greater stability and more democracy within the system. To these, I add that a parliamentary system's method of checks and balances is inferior to the methods of a presidential system."

The "more democracy" part is exemplified by the president being elected by direct vote of the people. In contrast, especially in a multi-party parliament, the executive is chosen by "complex post-election bargaining" and has no direct mandate from the people, which might be devastating during a crisis.

The "greater stability" characteristic, says Lutz, is taken for granted by many, and can only be appreciated when we examine the history of parliamentary governments, which can dismiss their executive with a simple "vote of no confidence": the average cabinet in France's Fourth Republic lasted only seven months before being dissolved. Further, the specter of a no-confidence vote makes it difficult for parliamentary systems to make unpopular decisions (that may have long-term benefits). Presidents, it is contended, are in a better position to take correct but unpopular decisions (whether they do so is another matter).

With respect to checks and balances, Lutz observes that the checks and balances between parliamentary executive and legislative branches are problematic in any situation—either the executive holds too much power or not enough. "In the end," says Lutz, "a presidential system offers greater stability and a more even distribution of power across governmental branches. Most importantly, though, it offers individuals a more active role in governing their nation. Therefore, a presidential system seems a more ideal form of democracy than a parliamentary system."

Who says the Filipinos aren't smart?

Reaching for the stars in space and in House

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SINCE the explosion of the US space shuttle Columbia just 16 minutes before its scheduled landing at Cape Canaveral in Florida, the world has gone into a big debate on whether it makes sense to send humans into space exploration, a most expensive and risky undertaking, or whether this should be confined to machines. Charles Levendosky, editorial page editor of Wyoming's Casper Star-Tribune, argues for the continuance of the space program, saying that the dream of conquering space grows, step by step. He says that while visionaries see further, "reality demands progressive technological advances to reach those further dreams." For instance, he notes that circling 400 km above us is the International Space Station, whose construction involved 16 nations and from whose platform multinational teams of astronauts will someday leap to explore Mars and deeper space.

* * *

Levendosky also notes that the history of space exploration has seen numerous deadly accidents prior to the Columbia tragedy. They include the fire that swept a US command module during a ground test in 1967, killing astronauts Gus Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee; the crash upon reentry of Soyuz 1 and II, and the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger less than two minutes after its launch in 1986. Indeed at this time it's good to remember all those who, as Levendosky put it, gave their lives "striving to reach toward the stars."

* * *

The question now being asked by citizens after what the INQUIRER editorial yesterday called the "sneak attack" by the "feckless 69" who voted to throw out the impeachment resolution against Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, despite overwhelming evidence of malfeasance, is whether the members of Congress can be trusted to amend the Constitution in a constituent assembly. The question is valid, for what we need in a "Con-As" as it is called (as opposed to the "Con-Con") are truly selfless Congress members who will be able to render fair impartial judgment on amendments, not Con Asses. The voting of the feckless 69 to support Tancangco despite 200 pages of COA and Comelec records and the Supreme Court decision voiding the Photokina contract, is an indication that they are not capable of such judgment or rejecting a party stand and obeying their conscience. *Nakakatakot ibigay sa kamay nila ang kapangyarihang ito.*

* * *

On the other hand, one has to salute the 57 men and women of the House who, despite enormous pressures from the Iglesia ni Cristo and other sects, and the Comelec commissioners themselves to support Tancangco, voted to have her case investigated. I felt proud listening to them articulate, one by one, their vote. Many of them represent districts where some mayors and vice mayors have cases pending before the Comelec; the commissioners openly threatened to decide against their allies. But they refused to be intimidated. Last Monday, despite the fact that it became clear at some point that the antis couldn't muster enough votes against Tancangco because some of their colleagues were out of town, they still stood up to openly articulate their rejection of the stupid and amateurish committee report. These 57 lawmakers did us all proud, and redeemed the House from their 69 feckless colleagues.

* * *

One of the 57, Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco, had actually left the session hall already, when his staffers called to inform him about the voting. He hurriedly returned to cast his vote. Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo was at first rumored to be not inclined to vote against the committee report absolving Tancangco, since his group has a pending petition before the Comelec not to allow other sectoral candidates who failed to get the minimum vote to sit in the House. But in the end Ocampo and his two partymates, Representatives Crispin Beltran and Lisa Masa, joined the clamor for an investigation. On the other hand, Makati Rep. Teddyboy Locsin gave his *kasimanwa* from Bacolod, impeachment sponsor Monico Puentebella, hell for gross incompetence in failing to convince the members of Tancangco's guilt. But in the end Locsin voted for investigation.

* * *

There were some 20 House members who were unable to vote last Monday, but who would have voted against Tancangco. But the citizens say: Never mind if they were unable to vote. They should speak out and explain their vote, as the Filipino people are listening. At this point, it's reaching for the stars to ask even for her investigation, but at least the people will know—and remember—where they stand.

The pro-Tancangco group may have won the impeachment battle, but they lost in the eyes of the people who applaud the intrepid group that refused to be cowed, as Akbayan Rep. Mario Aguja stressed with such fire. Perhaps it was this realization that made the group of San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora walk out of the session hall with long faces.

* * *

At a recent social gathering, noted constitutionalist Joaquin Bernas, who was among the 50 members of the Constitutional Commission appointed by President Cory to draft a new Constitution, after listening to the stories about how many lawmakers were intimidated by the Comelec commissioners, quipped, "Maybe we shouldn't have included the Comelec commissioners on the list of impeachable officials. It shows you impeachment does not work." To which Batanes Rep. Florencio Abad retorted, "Perhaps this can be the first amendment to the Constitution!" Actually the earlier impeachment case against Ombudsman Aniano Desierto yielded only 37 votes for impeachment, while there were 57 in Tancangco's case, which would have risen to perhaps 80 had the voting been held Tuesday.

Living leadership

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHAT is leadership? More specifically, what is "everyday leadership"? Is it a skill anyone can learn, or is it a gift, like talent, that you're born with?

To understand how leadership is developed and exercised even in one's own field of work or avocation, the Ayala Group invited four individuals to talk before participants in the Fifth Ayala Young Leaders Congress, an annual gathering of promising student leaders from all over the country, the Group's "strategic investment" in youth as part of its commitment to national development.

The invitees, 2002 Intel Foundation Excellence in Teaching awardee Josette Talamera Biyo, Figaro Coffee Co. executive director Pacita "Chit" Juan, World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines president Lory Tan, and PNOC Exploration CEO Rufino Bomasang, led the young leaders through the roads they tread on their way to their current positions of leadership, and shared the insights they gained along the way. I'll talk about two of them today.

* * *

AMONG THE FOUR, Bomasang endured the longest, most difficult journey. A member of the Kankana-ey tribe of the Cordilleras, he managed to gain an education despite his family's poverty through scholarships from Christian missionaries (William Henry Scott, the historian, was one of his early teachers) and the government. But when his meager allowance proved inadequate, he readily took on work—as a houseboy in Baguio, a laborer in the mines during summer breaks and a waiter while in college at the University of the Philippines. Despite the difficulties, he still managed to top the board exams for mining engineering.

"A poor Filipino, even an indigenous person, can rise up and contribute to Philippine society," Bomasang told his young audience. He says he considers his involvement in the Malampaya natural gas project, which not only contributes to national development but is also a rich source of "safe, natural energy," his greatest accomplishment. And even as he prepares to retire after 25 years of government service, Bomasang says it's still the "core values" he learned from his parents and in the *dap-ay*, the communal dormitory for Kankana-ey boys, that molded him and continue to guide him in work and life.

* * *

BIYO, the first Asian to win the Intel award, besting 90 other teachers from all over the world, describes herself as "a teacher who loves to teach and who continues to learn from her students." Despite the many honors accorded her and a teaching stint at De La Salle University after earning her doctorate, Biyo decided to bring her family to Iloilo mainly because, she said, "it is there where I am needed most."

Today, she teaches science research at the Philippine Science High School-Western Visayas. Believing that "anywhere can be a classroom or laboratory if the teacher is innovative," she takes her students on frequent field and research trips around the Visayas and even to Mindanao, where they observe nature and living creatures in their native environments and conduct experiments on site. "Despite our limited resources, the Filipino teacher and student can compete globally," she declares.

Teaching is her lifelong vocation, says Biyo, recalling that early in her teaching career, she asked her students to explore the school surroundings and bring back samples of living creatures. "I expected them to bring me insects or frogs," she says, "but instead they surprised me with lizards, birds and one even shocked me with a snake!" Leadership for her, then, is a combination of passion, commitment and dedication. "Believe in what you're doing no matter how simple," was her advice.

* * *

HERE'S an invitation to the "First Wild Meeting of Excluded Families," organized by all those "disinvited" from the recent Fourth World Meeting of Families. Far from moping, skulking, or hiding in shame, the organizers have in fact chosen as their slogan: "Mga di-kasal, separada, disgrasyada, bastarda, walang-anak, pamilya ni Padre, lesbyana, gay, bisekswal, atbp. NAGMAMAHALAN DIN! (The unwed, separated, single parents, illegitimate, childless, priests' families, lesbians, gay, bisexuals and others ALSO LOVE!)"

The gathering, to be held tomorrow, Sunday, Feb. 9, from 3 to 6 p.m. at the UP Diliman Lagoon, is organized by Likhaan, a women's health NGO doing primary health care for poor women, together with the UP College of Social Work and Community Development.

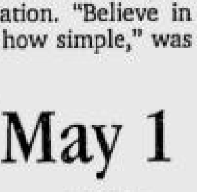
"Couples and their children, who are being scorned for their so-called 'unChristian' values, will participate in the event that will take the form of a usual family day," the invitation says. Among the typical family day activities such as fun games and booths will be messages on such issues as the real threats and crimes posed by bigotry and discrimination against the family. The gathering, they say, is meant to "provide a 'home' and to foster a sense of belonging and togetherness among children who grow up in a kind of domicile considered to be morally offensive, and are therefore discriminated against in school and in the neighborhood."

There will also be a press conference to include personalities "who are representative of or believers in these families that although excluded, are founded on love, respect and trust," say the organizers. To give their response to the Church's and State's "limiting and authoritarian definition of family" are such personalities as former MTRCB Chair Armida Siguion-Reyna, actress Malou de Guzman and Fr. Richard Mickley of the Order of St. Aelred, who leads the Gay Men's Support Group and presides at same-sex marriages, among others.

Shades of May 1

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



IT looked like the Winner Foundation had finally gotten its act together. It invited some press people for lunch to announce that finally it would open the Arroceros Park to the public since one kind soul was picking up the tab for a guard. I had volunteered boneless *bangus* and *bagoong*, topped by *chicharon* and fresh diced tomatoes to complement the *inihaw na talong* that someone else was bringing. Ninit and her cousin Chit prepared *adobo*, one of pork and another of chicken while Gemma sent fresh juice. No one remembered dessert, but no matter, it turned out that practically no one ate, thanks to the mayor of Manila who outdid himself by sending a contingent of teachers and supposed mothers of students (my driver claimed he recognized some of his neighbors from San Andres who were too old to be mothers of students), accompanied by barkers and agitators.

For reasons that are apparent to anyone who remembers the May 1 incident two years ago, this was déjà vu. The mayor's people claimed that those trying to preserve the area were "*mayayaman*" from Forbes Park. As I explained to some of them, no wonder this country will never get its act together: government officials continue to pit people against people for their own selfish interests. Because what exactly does the Winner Foundation stand to gain from all this, if you think of it? Besides, as far as I could see, there wasn't anyone from Forbes Park in that group.

Needless to say, there will be a disclaimer stating that the "show of force" was an initiative taken purely by that group, that each of them prepared his own placard, although all the placards I saw were curiously uniform in size and obviously written by just one person and attached to finely sawn 2 x 2 lumber. As a final show of ownership, they placed their own lock on the park's gate supposedly paid for by themselves.

Amazingly amateur effort, all things considered. Perhaps next time the mayor's people could do better.

The usual "elitist" accusations were hurled at the little old ladies, and really one was tempted to invoke that adage about the road to hell being paved with good intentions. Because if you think about it, how many people give two hoots if Manila, the capital city of the Philippines, is buried in cement, and fancy sputnik-like lights imported from China stand on every street corner? Do you think any of our politicians, who has an apartment in New York or a house in San Francisco or Century City in Los Angeles, gives a damn?

I think it's been a long time since anyone really cared about it. Most politicians I know don't live there anyway, preferring the Makati villages or Greenhills or Alabang. You'd think our poor would notice, wouldn't you? At least, Mayor Arsenio Lacson lived right there in Sampaloc and President Elpidio Quirino had that house on the boulevard. I think even Mayor Pablo Cuneta lived in Pasay before he figured that the air in Dasmariñas Village was more salubrious than all the motel-lined streets of his city.

Now let me tell you what line of argument or crap was being dished out. The mayor of Manila knows best. The mayor is doing it for the benefit of the many rather than the few. (The few in this case refers to the goody-two-shoes like Ninit and company and not to the greater Manila population dying of lung cancer due to the pollution.) The property belongs to the teachers who need homes or buildings or whatever it is even if the money used to buy the property came from the taxpayers and therefore the property belongs to the people in general.

No one bothered apparently to explain that the property to the left of the Arroceros Park which also belongs to City Hall is not being used and already it has buildings that could be remodeled for whatever purpose the mayor may have in mind. So why this insistence on building on this open space? Well, obviously because the mayor feels like it. As many people have warned, do not antagonize the mayor because he will be *pikon* and insist even more on having his own way. Those of us who saw the Jai-Alai Building's demolition are rather unfortunately aware of the mayor's especial brand of pettiness.

So do not ask for whom the bells toll, they're tolling for Manila's last open spaces. The mayor will do whatever he feels like doing because, as I've pointed out, no one in government gives a damn, starting from the President of the Republic down to the last congressman. They have other interests, other priorities, and Manila even if it is the premier city, just doesn't make the grade. Besides, they sincerely believe that the mayor can make or break them at the polls.

It is ironic that for all our vaunted nationalism, it hasn't occurred to us that the evil colonizers; the Spaniards, established a botanical garden because this, after all, was a tropical country and the other bogeyman, the American, maintained it so that it became the pride of Manila and a tourist attraction. And guess who wants to cement Mehan Garden and Arroceros Park? None other than a Filipino public official masquerading as a servant of the people, and no elected official sees the irony involved.

Wounds that healed

YOUNG BLOOD

Ramelyn A. Septimo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I HAD just turned 7 when I lost my sister and my dad in a terrible accident. Their death put to a severe test my mother's strength and shook my young faith.

I was too young then, but I could feel the deep void they left in our lives. As I peeped into their coffins, a numbing pain shot through my whole being and paralyzed my body when the realization hit me that those lifeless mannequins were two of the people I loved most and suddenly lost. I went down from my dreamy castle and began to understand that life often worked in ways that were so unlike our childhood fantasies. From that moment onwards, I decided to be an adult in a young girl's body.

After the funeral, the pain became even more acute and almost unbearable. My mom tried hard to fake smiles and I started to shut out unsolicited expressions of sympathy. We wanted to move on, but people kept reminding us of our loss. It was fatal to be fixated. Each day we had to strain ourselves to move forward and get on with our lives.

After a few weeks, my mom started teaching again and I went back to school. My mom's strength was unbelievable. She worked to keep us both alive in spite of her own pain. But in the middle of the night after a day's work, I would hear her sobbing—a barely audible sob, but I knew that its origin was deep and painful.

The next morning I would take great care not to let on that I heard her crying. At that young age, I already appreciated the darkness and the solemnity of the night. It was only in the quiet of the night that we could find some respite and have our sanity restored.

I strived so hard to be the daughter my mom deserved. I tried to match her strength and her perseverance. Inspired by her courage, I was able to ease my pain. I swore to myself that I would try to compensate her for her selflessness any way I could.

I was an achiever in school. I was the valedictorian in grade school, a consistent honor student in high school and a cum laude graduate in college. I was my mother's pride and joy.

Not so long ago in the darkness of my room, memories of daddy and *ate* flashed through my mind. They seemed so alive and real. For several minutes my mind kept clicking a series of recollections and then it just stopped. I forced myself to bring back other memories but there was nothing. Then it dawned on me that I had spent only seven years of borrowed moments with them and all of my 22 years struggling to survive with the help of the woman who was sleeping peacefully close to me. I looked at her face, and I was struck by our similarity. Indeed, I said to myself, I am my mother's daughter and I am so proud that I am.

The following morning I woke up early and said a short prayer to God. It was a prayer of gratitude and a prayer for reconciliation with Him. After 15 years of denial, I was ready to admit that because of the tragedy a small part of me doubted His love. Now I knew God had His reasons for putting me through such a severe trial. He wanted me to trust Him fully and appreciate one of the greatest gifts He had given me: a mother whose love for me is greater than the love for herself and whose love is a symbol of His own infinite love for me.

This morning I am heading for my office with a smile on my face. I am so blessed to have found such inner peace. The wound that I had borne from the time I was 7 had mended completely. I am now a full-grown woman, determined to fight my battles and succeed.

The clock ticks 8:45 and I run to catch the elevator. I am late for work but never too late to learn, to live and to let go.

Ramelyn A. Septimo, 22, finished AB English at Bicol University and now works as events coordinator in a mall in Legazpi City. Her mother passed away last month.

Two towers

Pia C. Campo

ONE of my minor resolutions for the year is to watch "Lord of the Rings: Two Towers" at least once a week. So far I have watched it thrice, and I have gotten some extra pleasure in finding analogies in this fantasy classic and our everyday life.

The two towers, Isengard and Mordor, are akin to President Macapagal-Arroyo and former President Estrada, trying to outsmart each other and battling for control of Middle-earth, which is the country. And like the ring that has the power to seduce the characters into coveting it, elective positions offer the same fatal attraction to our politicians. The only difference is that the ring is evil by its nature while elective posts are not necessarily so.

A seemingly endless war (verbal and political) between the armies of these two "towers" continues to rage, and innocent people are caught in the crossfire. The casualties are everywhere: the starving children, the homeless families, the underpaid workers, the overworked employees, retrenched laborers, the hungry farmers and fishermen, the displaced indigenous people.

Like Ents, some of us choose to remain silent and stand on the side like trees, telling ourselves that this is not our war and that nothing will ever change. It is only when the things we hold dear are finally taken or destroyed that we react in anger.

Some of us choose to leave the country or encourage others to do so, saying we do not belong to this place. But as Meriadoc "Merry" Brandybuck said, "But you are part of this world, aren't you?" We are citizens of this country and we have a stake in the outcome of this "war" between the towers.

There are those who remain true like Eomer and the Riders of Rohan, but because of the devious manipulations of people in power and influence, they have been banished and labeled as rebels and even terrorists.

Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin—simple and sincere hobbits, bonded by true friendship—are like the Filipino youth who have been given one mission: to destroy the ring of politics without principles and corrupt governance.

Like Frodo, we can also be seduced by power, but if we form a true fellowship, we will be victorious in the end. There are many forces of evil at work, but there are still forces of good around us. Our path ahead is filled with obstacles and doubts, but we need to hold on to something: the firm belief that there is still hope for this country.

Among the many characters, great or small, good or evil, what have we chosen to play? Our future and that of our children are at stake, what stand will we take? Which side will we choose? What stories do we want to tell our children?

The answers to these questions are all up to us.

Pia C. Campo, 24, works as a science education associate at the University of the Philippines National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development.

Let people rewrite the Constitution

A DEBATE is raging in Congress on how to rewrite the Constitution.

There are those who would like to monopolize both legislation and the rewriting of the Constitution by constituting themselves into a constituent assembly. They contend that it is easier, faster and cheaper with practically no expense at all. True, but how in the world can they change and reshape the Constitution when they themselves are part of the system that is going to be reformed and changed?

Speaker Jose de Venecia and his colleagues are just afraid that their personal and political interests will not be protected if independent and freely elected delegates to a constitutional convention were to rewrite the Constitution. By their pronouncements, they are appropriating for themselves the reshaping and reforming of the people's Constitution because they cannot entrust its rewriting to any group that is independent of the present traditional political system that needs to be reformed and changed.

Remember we changed Marcos but not the system. And this *tradpol* system has been perpetuated through the administrations of Cory, Ramos, Estrada, and now Gloria, if we hold the 2004 elections. Through the decades, elections produced generally the same faces, the continuation of a dynasty, and some new ones that were initially well-meaning but were soon eaten up by the system and corrupted. What did the new ones, the neophytes in Congress, do after a session or two? They hollered: "No pork, no work." This proves that it is the system that has got to be changed, not just the persons in the system.

It was also floated that those who wanted a constitutional convention could organize a council of eminent persons to draft the Constitution and submit it to the House for enactment. This was a tongue-in-cheek suggestion.

Again it was suggested that even in a convention, the influence of the politicians and their desires and interests will just be put into the new Constitution by their relatives who will surely be elected as delegates.

It is a consolation that in Congress, there is a level-headed group which wants to leave the rewriting of the Constitution to the people. Knowing that the present system of government has caused restiveness and instability among many sectors of our society, the urgent task facing the nation is to start the groundwork for constitutional change now. As a priority agenda, Congress should immediately legislate and appropriate funds for the holding of a constitutional convention this year and ensure the independence and non-partisanship of delegates. The people should now realize that an overhauled political system will redound to better governance and better benefits that will improve their quality of life.

—FORTUNATO U. ABAT,
major general, AFP (ret.)
and chair, Forces

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Do our drivers really know how to drive?

METRO Manila has long been used to the traffic reduction scheme that was invented and reinvented to help ease traffic in the city. It was a temporary answer to a problem caused by the lack of city planning, wrong and corrupt use of public funds and simple negligence by past administrations.

Now, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando has scrapped the vehicle reduction scheme which inconvenienced many motorists and produced negative effects on our economy. I agree with Fernando that it's time such a scheme be stopped. I also agree that it should not be applied in cities that do not have as much traffic as Makati.

We must realize that the traffic problem is only aggravated by the lack of discipline of many motorists. From the virtual parking lot at the Edsa-Boni bus stop to the chaotic avenues of Alabang-Zapote Road and Edsa-Taft-Las Piñas area, one can see how road discipline has gone from bad to worse. If all of us will just learn better driving habits and be more disciplined and drive properly, we will all benefit from less traffic and faster travel time.

But the question remains: Do all motorists know the proper way to drive? Do all of us, licensed professional and non-professional drivers, know what "right of way" or "yield" mean? Do all of us understand the meaning of the hundreds of street signs we see every day? I challenge Fernando to conduct a reexamination of all drivers and let all of us reapply for a new driver's license. I bet that, if implemented properly with no fixers and cheaters, 90 percent of all examinees will flunk the test on their first seven takes.

—NOEL CARPIO,
1 Molave St.,
Ramax Subdivision,
Quezon City 1100

Claim to Maysilo Estate upheld by Supreme Court

WE, the rightful heirs of the Maysilo Estate of Caloocan, would like to refute the baseless allegations made against us in the press by Land Registration Authority Administrator Benedicto Ulep and his masters who call themselves "The Group of May 3, 1917."

First, our claim to the estate by way of Original Certificate of Title 994 dated April 19, 1917 has been upheld no less than three times by the Supreme Court. In one of these decisions, the Court ruled in 1992 against the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and upheld the validity of our ownership. In that and the other two cases, it said, "Since the land in question has already been registered under OCT No. 994 dated April 19, 1917, the subsequent registration of the same land on May 3, 1917 is null and void."

While Ulep and the May 3 Group claim that the findings of the Department of Justice as well as the Senate were in their favor, any first year law student would know that such opinions are superseded by the decisions of the Supreme Court.

As if the Court's actions recognizing our rights weren't enough, Ulep last Dec. 9 tried to transfer Caloocan City register of deeds Regulo Coloma. Only a preliminary injunction issued by the regional trial court saved Coloma. The trial court found the move to transfer Coloma to be illegal and without merit.

What happened next was more troubling and suspicious. A day after receiving the preliminary injunction, Ulep ordered his men in the Caloocan register of deeds to illegally confiscate 13 land titles related to the Maysilo Estate. As a result, criminal and administrative charges for contempt, not to mention disbarment, have been filed against him.

We wonder why Ulep is going through all this trouble to stop us from realizing our legitimate claim to our own property. Who are the individuals making up this May 3 Group that he is trying to protect?

All that we want is to have what is truly ours. We have been fighting for this for 85 years. Many of our relatives have passed away without getting the chance to live on land that rightfully was theirs. It is our hope that our children will not have to continue this same fight.

—MELLANIE RYAN B.
ROMASANTA,
1390 Palm Ave.,
Dasmariñas Village, Makati City

Can the Supreme Court be bribed?

THIS is to correct the falsehoods contained in a letter written by retired Navy Capt. Eladio C. Tangan which appeared in the column of Ramon Tulfo last Jan. 28.

I am deeply saddened that Tulfo, who has a reputation for championing the cause of the oppressed and downtrodden, has taken the side of the oppressor who killed my father and who was convicted by the unanimous vote of the five justices of the First Division of the Supreme Court, which includes Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

In his letter, Tangan said that he was a victim of injustice and that he had "no doubt that money changed hands somewhere along the way." In plain language, he was saying that the Supreme Court had been bribed to find him guilty of killing my father and increase the penalty imposed upon him.

Bribe the Supreme Court? Bribe Chief Justice Davide? Having been convicted after his self-serving claims were not believed by the Supreme Court, Tangan is now trying to discredit the high court and my family with his unfounded claim that money changed hands.

I have read and reread the records of the trial if only to find out why my father was killed by Tangan. Each time I read the testimony of the innocent young girls, who happened to be in the area and witnessed my father's killing, I cannot help but shed tears.

Tangan's story falls apart when he says that he was mauled by my father and my father's uncle, even after he had identified himself as a Navy captain. Civilians tremble when confronted by the military even during these post-martial-law years. Are not abusive military men and police regular topics of Tulfo's columns even today? It is therefore inconceivable that my father assaulted Tangan even after he had identified himself as a Navy captain during the Marcos years.

I urge Tulfo to read the records of the case and he will see that no such mauling or bumping took place. I ask him to be fair because my parents and I are the victims here, not Tangan. If the Supreme Court increased his penalty, he only has himself and his lawyers to blame for appealing his conviction.

Tulfo has aired the side of Tangan all these years. He has done enough for him. I hope that he will be fair enough to print this letter in its entirety.

I do not know Tulfo. But some time ago, he said something that made me wish I knew him. Tulfo said that he once encountered a man in a traffic incident who did something he did not like. Tulfo said he taught this man a lesson he would never forget.

How I wish Tulfo was with my father when Tangan brandished his gun. He could have taught Tangan a lesson and my father would be with me today.

—MIA S. MIRANDA,
844 Nicanor Reyes St.,
Manila

GMA should act in the national interest

THE BEST way for President Macapagal-Arroyo to protect our 60,000 OFWs in Kuwait is not to give them misleading assurances of moral support and promises of so-called contingency plans (whose final details are not even clear) but to ascertain for herself what our "genuine national interest" actually is and what an "enlightened foreign policy" should be in the face of an impending US-led war against Iraq, an unfortunate phenomenon that will surely expand into a destructive "global war of civilizations" that will surely further impoverish our nation.

Our national interest and the collective interest of the international community lie in the zealous promotion and preservation of the basic and fundamental international law principle of "exhaustion of peaceful diplomatic remedies" to resolve the question of alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons, with the use or threat of force serving merely as the "last resort." Such a war can only be legally and morally justified if it is approved by the United Nations Security Council.

GMA must wake up to the reality that the Philippines is no longer a colony of the United States; that, as a nation-state, the Philippines must independently base the nature, direction and content of its foreign policy on its "national interest" and the shared world vision of its people; and that it must harmonize its international behavior as a member of the community of nations with the letter and spirit of the doctrine of "pacific settlement of world conflicts," in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter.

If indeed GMA has renounced her political ambition to run for president in 2004, she would be truly free in her heart to unite the country and lead its people to the great path of genuine prosperity, but she must follow her Christian conscience, diplomatically delineate the pro-peace Philippine national interest from the pro-war American interest, and courageously work for genuine world peace, the pacific settlement of world conflicts and the promotion of international unity and cooperation, all of which have been the urgent subject of the repeated exhortations of Pope John Paul II, Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, the World Council of Churches, the National Conference of American Bishops and international civil society.

—MANUEL J. LASERNA JR.,
professor of law,
Far Eastern University,
Manila

Paying the right taxes

NOW that the cat is out of the bag, I wonder what the Bureau of Internal Revenue will do with regard to the insufficient income taxes being paid by big movie stars despite the millions they make. Will there be cases filed for tax evasion against these movie people?

If the BIR and by extension, the Macapagal administration, is really serious about improving tax collection, it should go after these people who even have the temerity to complain about the 10 percent value-added tax which they will not shoulder in the first place.

It's about time that these people realized that it is not just enough to pay their taxes but that they should pay the taxes commensurate with the income that they earn just like we in the fixed-income sectors are doing.

—TOTI B. BAYUDAN,
TBBayudan@manilabank.com

Vigilantism on the rise again

IN THE PAST two weeks, there have been three vigilante killings in Quezon City. In each of these incident, the victims were allegedly robbers or petty thieves.

Some may say that this is good because some of the dregs of society have been eliminated. But this is alarming. Vigilantes proliferate when the police, military and their paramilitary groups feel that they are being tied down by the law and have to resort to extra-judicial killings.

Salvaging is not only practiced now by the military in the countryside as evidenced by more than 30 activists killed in the provinces, but is now also becoming prevalent in the cities as well.

As in the era of martial rule, at first they begin with killing petty criminals. Then they target people and organizations that are critical of the government, espouse the welfare of the people and fight for their rights.

What is really alarming is that it is the government itself which allows and supports these types of actions. This is evident from the positive attitude of President Macapagal-Arroyo toward such personalities as Davao City Mayor Duterte and Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando who break the law while implementing it.

The measures being pushed by the government like the anti-terrorism bill and the national ID system will only embolden these individuals in committing crimes and create paranoia in our communities.

Vigilantism may seem like a noble act for some but it should not be confused with vigilance, because in the end it can only hurt the people it claims to be protecting.

—ASHLEY DY,
chair, National Network
of Agrarian Reform Advocates-
Youth Sector, 18-A Matatag St.,
Quezon City

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Cause of Columbia tragedy remains a mystery

NEWS ANALYSIS

Patrick Moser

HOUSTON—One week after Columbia broke into flaming debris, killing its crew of seven, Nasa is struggling to understand what caused the tragedy, and grounding its space shuttles until it finds the answer.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration investigators are examining 32 seconds of data and thousands of pieces of wreckage found mainly in eastern Texas, where remains of the astronauts also were retrieved. But so far, the data remains hopelessly garbled and the massive search has failed to uncover what Nasa calls "red tag" items—pieces of wreckage that could provide crucial clues into what happened.

Bad weather in past days has hampered the search, and Nasa officials say investigations also were slowed down by individuals mailing fake pictures of the space shuttle breaking apart.

The experts are particularly keen to find pieces of the left wing, which is the main focus of the probe. Nasa investigators say that as Columbia reentered the Earth's atmosphere last Feb. 1, temperature rose significantly on the left side of its fuselage, especially around the wheel well. Its autopilot tried to compensate for increased drag on the left wing, firing steering jets to right the space shuttle and keep the vehicle pointed straight ahead, according to Nasa's shuttle program manager Ron Dittemore. But the 116-ton spacecraft lost the battle more than 61,000 meters over Texas and 16 minutes short of its scheduled landing in Cape Canaveral.

Investigators initially believed the problem may have been linked to a piece of lightweight foam insulation that broke off one of Columbia's external fuel tank on liftoff last Jan. 16, and hit the underside of the left wing. Nasa later moved away from that theory but did not discount it entirely, stressing it was not ruling out any cause.

The space administration hopes technicians eventually will be able to decipher garbled data recorded by computers 32 seconds after voice contact with the crew broke off. They were also looking into suggestions that the shuttle started breaking up above California, earlier than initially thought.

As the massive probe was underway, an independent board was formed and given ultimate responsibility for the official conclusions of the investigations. That means the board, headed by a retired admiral who investigated the 2000 attack on the USS Cole off Yemen, will eventually decide when the three remaining space shuttles will fly again.

The grounding of the fleet has prompted US and Russian officials to plan a meeting later this month to discuss the future of the International Space Station, whose supplies are usually flown in aboard the US space vehicles.

US President George W. Bush has made it clear the space program will go on, a message the families of the crew members had said they hoped to hear.

Bush paid tribute to the seven astronauts at a stirring memorial ceremony Tuesday attended by relatives of all seven astronauts at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. "They go in peace for all mankind, and all mankind is in their debt," he said.

The remains of the astronauts were being prepared at a military base in Delaware, where DNA analysis is being done to identify them, after being flown there from Texas in flag-draped caskets. They were to be returned to the families, and the remains of Israeli Ilan Ramon were to be flown to Israel, where he is considered a national hero.

As the search for remains of the shuttle and its crew continued, authorities reiterated their warning that the wreckage could contain toxic substances. They also issued a stern warning that anyone taking debris home as a souvenir will be severely punished. Two people already were arrested in east Texas and charged with stealing government property.

"The issue here is the thermodynamics of the space shuttle and any piece of that is important to this investigation," said US attorney Michael Shelby. "No one knows which piece will unravel the mystery."

AFP

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

N. Korea says it's readying for total war; US unfazed

WASHINGTON—The White House Thursday brushed aside Pyongyang's warning that it is preparing for the possibility of total war, saying that the United States has "robust plans for any contingencies."

The Stalinist regime, which says it has restarted a controversial nuclear reactor, has also threatened a possible preemptive strike on US troops if Washington beefs up its forces in the region.

"We've heard much talk from North Korea before. Obviously the United States is very prepared, with robust plans, for any contingencies," White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said.

But US President George W. Bush still "believes that diplomacy is the way to handle the situation vis-a-vis North Korea" in consultation with China, Russia, South Korea and Japan, said Fleischer.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration came under heavy fire from opposition Democrats in the US Congress, who charged he was focusing on efforts to disarm Iraq at the expense of diplomatic efforts to rein in North Korea.

"The president should stop downplaying this threat, start paying more attention to it, and immediately engage the North Koreans in direct talks," Senate Democratic Minority Leader Tom Daschle said on the floor of the chamber.

Other Democrats took aim at the administration's much-stated position that the nuclear standoff with North Korea is not a crisis, warning Washington must step up its peaceful efforts to disarm the Stalinist regime.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell rejected those charges, saying: "We are not ignoring these issues, we are deeply engaged in these issues, we are in touch with the North Koreans in a variety of channels."

Powell said he had over the past 36 hours discussed the crisis with the foreign ministers of China and Russia, and that US diplomats were in touch with the Stalinist state through various channels.

"We don't have the luxury of dealing with one issue," Powell told the Senate Foreign Relations committee. "And we are prepared to engage with the North Koreans, and we're prepared to talk to them.

"But what we can't find ourselves in the position of doing is essentially panicking at their activities and their demands that, 'You have to discuss this with us in only the way that we say you should discuss it with us.'"

The North's top general, Kim Yong-Chun, a close adviser to supreme leader Kim Jong-Il, urged the Stalinist nation's million-strong Army to prepare for a final showdown with US "imperialists."

According to North Korea's official media, Kim, chair of the North Korean Army's joint chiefs of staff, told military top brass Wednesday to prepare for battle.

"He called for increasing the capability of the people's Army in every way . . . so as to win a brilliant victory in the final showdown with the US imperialists," said Rodong Sinmum. *AFP*

Goodbye, floppy disk

AUSTIN, Texas—In what may be the wave of the future, Dell Computer Corp. said goodbye to the past on Thursday when it announced it would stop making floppy disk drives standard equipment on its higher end desktop personal computers.

Austin, Texas-based Dell, the No. 2 personal computer maker, said floppy drives had been overtaken by technologies offering greater storage capacity and would become an option on its Dimension 8250 models.

Other Dell models may lose the floppy by end of the year, depending on customer response, Dell spokesperson Lionel Menchaca said.

He said the decision was made because technologies such as USB flash memory offer much more storage capacity than floppies and are more useful with today's mega-memory computers.

"You insert it right into the USB port, and your computer reads it just like it would read a floppy drive. The benefit is, you've got much more capacity—instead of just 1.44 megabytes, at the low end you have 16 megabytes."

The floppy drive has been the most widely used method of transferring data between computers since the dawn of the computer age.

The first 5.25-inch floppy drive was introduced by Shugart Associates in 1976 to be compatible with International Business Machines Corp. mainframe computers, then made the transition to IBM's early personal computers.

Sony Corp. introduced the 3.5-inch diskette in 1980, and by the early 1990s the 3.5-inch floppy, with a capacity of 1.44 megabytes, had become the standard method of data transfer in PCs. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Texas snubs World Court

HOUSTON—An unrepentant Texas said on Thursday it would ignore a World Court order demanding it stay the executions of two Mexicans, a decision likely to create more friction between the United States and its allies over capital punishment. The International Court of Justice at The Hague on Wednesday ordered the US to stay the executions of three Mexicans and reserved the right to intervene in dozens of other cases. Mexico brought the World Court case last month, arguing that 54 of its citizens on death row should get retrials. It accused US police of violating an international treaty by failing to tell the men of their right to consular assistance after being arrested. "According to our reading of the law and the treaty, there is no authority for the federal government or this World Court to prohibit Texas from exercising the laws passed by our legislature," said Gene Acuna, a spokesperson for Texas Gov. Rick Perry. The state is by far the nation's death penalty leader. *Reuters*

US citizens warned

WASHINGTON—The United States issued a new worldwide warning to US citizens abroad Thursday, alerting them to a "heightened threat" of terrorist attacks, including those using chemical and biological weapons. The State Department said it was issuing the new warning "to remind US citizens of the need to remain vigilant due to a heightened threat of terrorist actions that may target civilians, including the possibility of attacks by non-conventional weapons." In addition, it urged Americans to avoid all demonstrations overseas and called for them to be prepared for emergency evacuations, a subject first raised in late January. The warning superceded an earlier alert dating from November that had noted possible attempts to kidnap US citizens abroad by terrorists, including those affiliated with Islamist militant leader Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. *AFP*

UN: Arab nations laggards

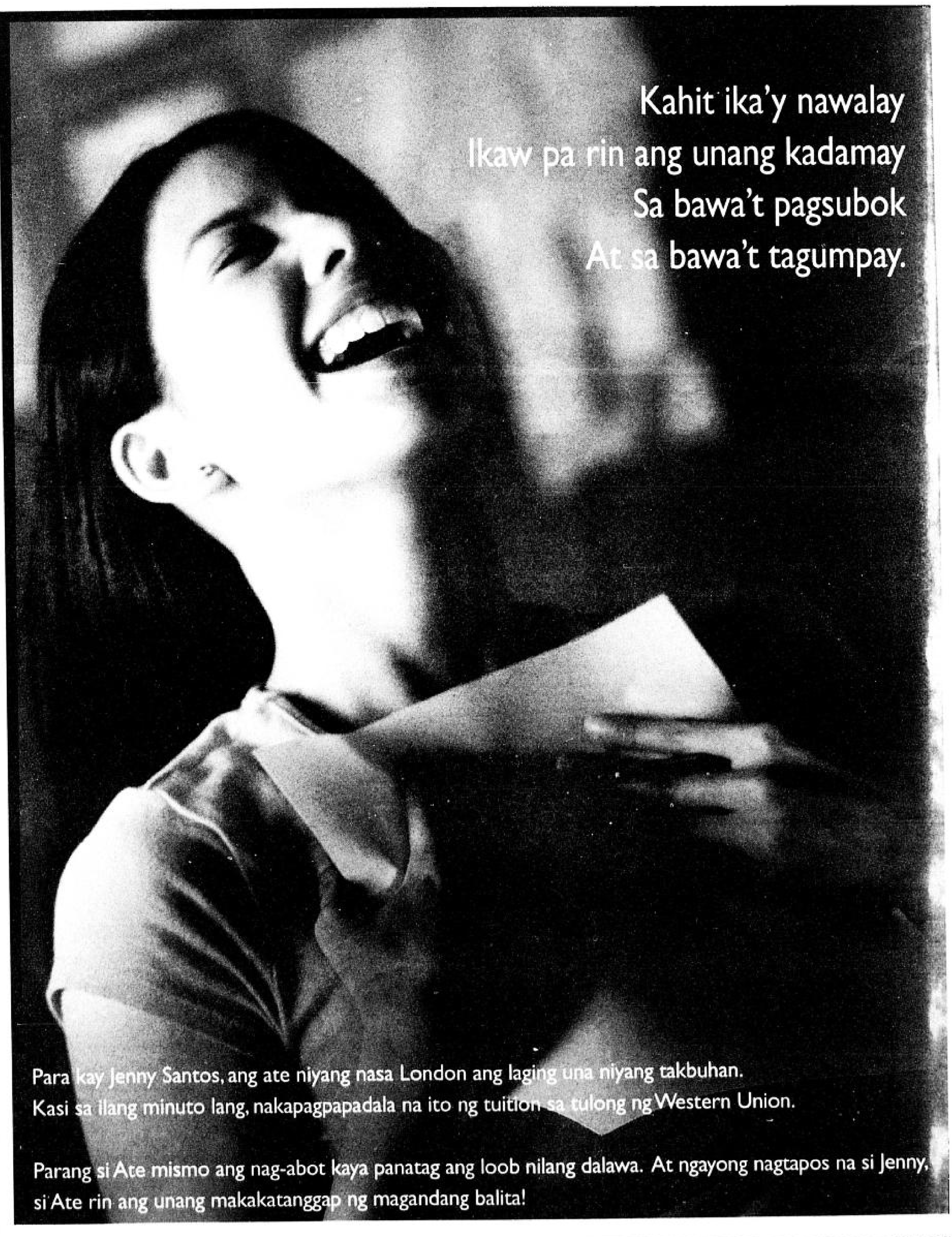
UNITED NATIONS—The Arab world is moving very slowly to become a part of the global economy, lagging well behind other regions in its share of world trade, computer usage and tourism, a UN panel said on Thursday. While Arab nations account for 4.7 percent of the world population, their economies account for just 2 percent of global goods and services, 3.2 percent of world exports and 1.4 percent of total imports, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia said. While there are some 5 million personal computers in Arab countries, that represents a mere 1 percent of the world total, the commission said in its annual review of globalization and regional integration. *Reuters*

Guantanamo suicide tries

WASHINGTON—Five of the 625 inmates being held at the US military's detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have attempted suicide in the past three weeks, prompting efforts to try to prevent more suicide tries, the Pentagon said on Thursday. The recent spate of suicide attempts began when an inmate tried to hang himself on Jan. 16, said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Barbara Burfeind, a Pentagon spokesperson. That inmate remains hospitalized in serious but stable condition, Burfeind said. The United States has held men it calls "unlawful combatants" at high-security detention facilities at the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay since January 2002. There were 10 suicide attempts among inmates at the facility in all of 2002. *Reuters*

Mideast bloodshed

JERUSALEM—Bloodshed hit Israel and the occupied territories Thursday as eight people were killed, including two Israeli soldiers struck down in a firefight and two Palestinian medics shot dead by a helicopter gunship outside a Gaza City hospital. Two Palestinian attacked and killed two Israeli soldiers before being shot dead themselves near Nablus before dawn. The gunmen were from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed offshoot of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah, and the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the armed wing of the secular Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Hours earlier, an Israeli helicopter gunship rained down heavy machine-gun fire on a hospital compound in eastern Gaza City, killing two male nurses as they ran outside to see what was happening and to calm their terrified patients, a hospital statement said. *AFP*



Para kay Jenny Santos, ang ate niyang nasa London ang laging una niyang takbuhan.
Kasi sa ilang minuto lang, nakapagpapadala na ito ng tuition sa tulong ng Western Union.

Parang si Ate mismo ang nag-abot kaya panatag ang loob nilang dalawa. At ngayong nagtapos na si Jenny, si Ate rin ang unang makakatanggap ng magandang balita!

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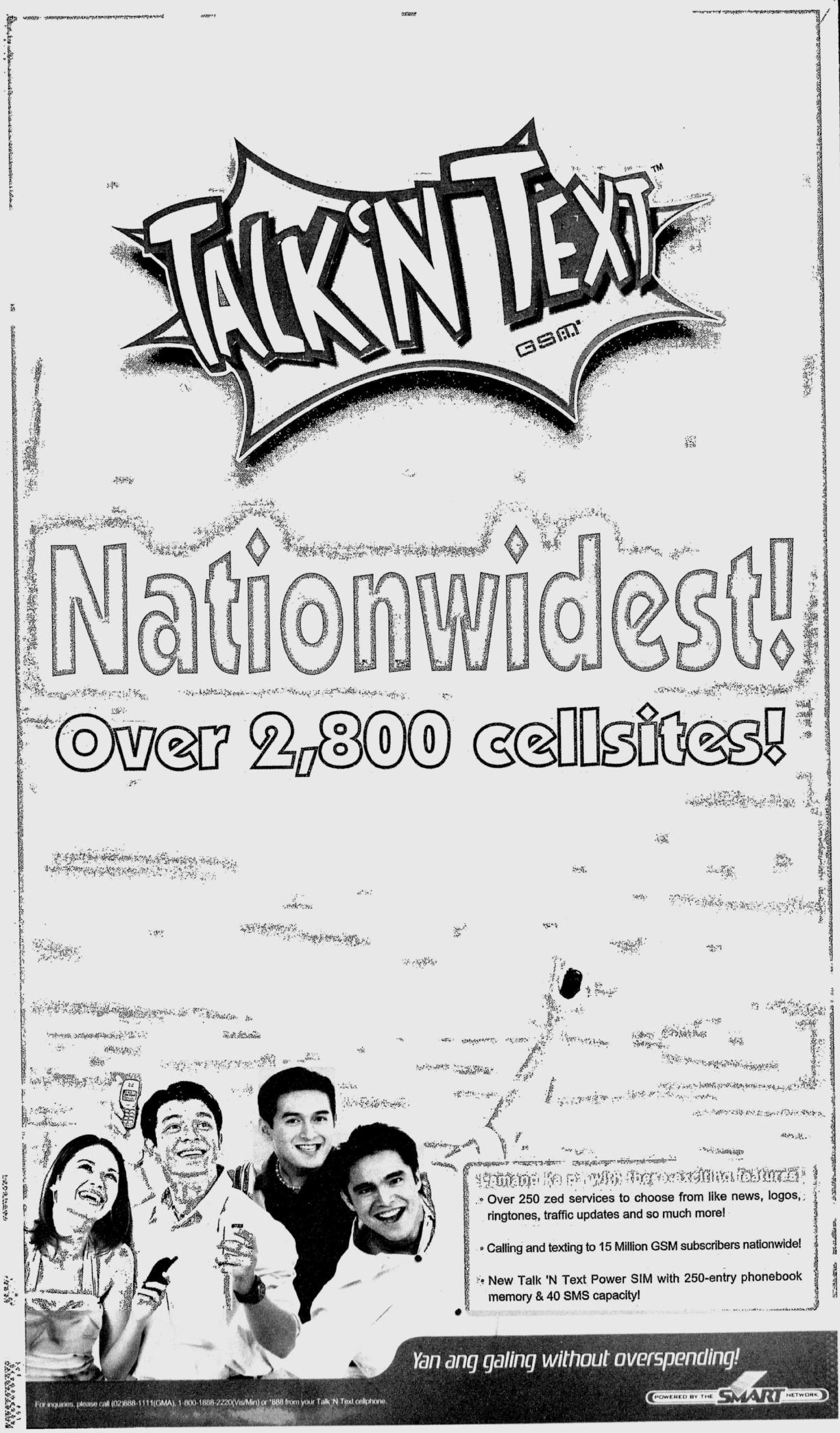

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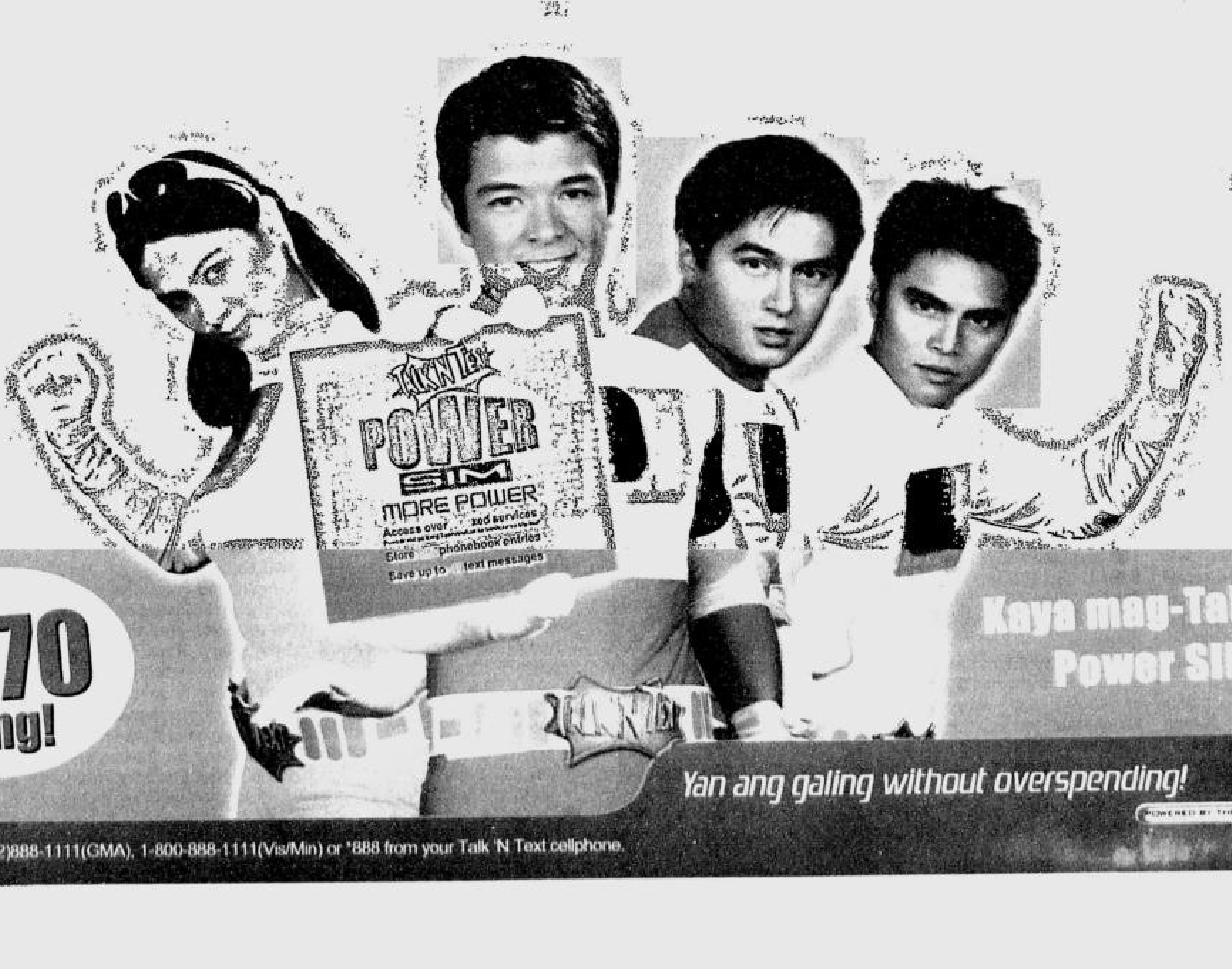
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2 in boy's kidnap draw death penalty

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Two of the five men tagged in the 2001 kidnapping of an 11-year-old son of a businessman here were meted the death penalty yesterday.

Family Court Judge Pampio Abarintos imposed the death sentence on Jovencio Camado and Roberto Galope, both residents of Davao City, as principals in the kidnapping of Ryan James Yu on July 23, 2001.

Abarintos, a Regional Trial Court judge for 16 years, has imposed the capital punishment for the first time because of the aggravating circumstance that a P50-million ransom was demanded from the victim's family. The ransom was later brought down to P1.5 million after the Yu family begged with the kidnappers to lower the ransom.

Camado was tagged as the one who purchased the vehicle used in kidnapping Yu. Prosecution witnesses identified Camado as the one who forcibly took the child aboard a motorcycle. The boy and his abductor transferred to a car driven by Galope.

Two of their co-accused were meted lesser penalties as accessories to the crime. Efren Hernandez was sentenced to 20 years in prison while Edgar Manibog was meted a 12-to-17-year prison term.

The fifth accused, Henry Fernandez, brother of Efren and a chef of a restaurant at the Davao City International Airport, was acquitted for failure of the prosecution to sufficiently produce evidence that he participated in the crime.

Abarientos has also ordered the four suspects to each pay P75,000 to Yu's family as their civil liability.

Another suspect, former Cebu City policeman Engelberto Durano, who was recently arrested, was tagged as the mastermind in the kidnapping. His case is being separately heard also by Abarintos.

The court gave weight to the testimony of accused turned-state witness Oster Gian Repollo who recalled in detail how the operation was conducted including their itinerary, description of the rented houses, the clothes they were wearing.

Yu was kidnapped at around 7 a.m. of July 23, 2001 while he was on his way to school at St. Francis of Assisi together with his family's houseboy, Joel Bation.

While walking along Friendship Street, Green Valley Subdivision, Capitol Hills, Cebu City, three persons on board a red motorcycle alighted and grabbed the boy. One handed the ransom note to Bation.

The victim was brought to Barangay Lahug, Cebu City, and taken to a safehouse.

Yu escaped two days later, on July 25, 2001. Police found him wandering.

American's body found in Cebu apartment room

CEBU CITY—An American was found dead yesterday morning inside his apartment along Escario Street here.

James Thomas Meyer, 62, was discovered lifeless when members of the Emergency Rescue Unit Foundation (ERUF) responded to an alarm around 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

Police Homicide Investigator Jun Pastorfide ruled out foul play because Meyer's body bore no signs of a struggle.

Pastorfide said based on their initial investigation, Meyer had been taking medication even before he arrived here from the United States last month.

The police investigator said they have also interviewed Vita Agravante, owner of Vits Apartment where Meyer was staying since Dec. 26, who said that the American had been suffering from severe stomach disorder.

Several medicines were found inside Meyer's room, some of which were believed to have been brought by the American from the United States.

Pastorfide said a friend of Meyer, Virgilio Co Jr., confirmed that the victim was taking medication but failed to divulge his actual condition. An autopsy would be conducted to determine the cause of Meyer's death, the investigator said.

He said Meyer could have been dead for at least four to six hours before his body was discovered, according to the information relayed to him by ERUF personnel.

Meyer was found dead inside his room, wearing only a sweater with no underwear. The victim, according to the landlady, was renting the one-story apartment alone.

Police have retrieved a camera, a condom and several personal belongings of the foreigner.

Investigators said a newspaper boy prompted the owner of the apartment to call for police assistance after the owner asked where the American was. *Jolene Bulambot, PDI Visayas Bureau*

EDWIN BACASMAS

MEATLESS
Meat stalls in markets in many areas in the country went "meat-less" as a result of protests against the continued smuggling and importation of meat which has resulted in hundreds of millions of pesos in losses for meat producers and growers in the country.

Farmers seek GMA help to amend rules on rice importation

FARMERS' groups yesterday called on President Macapagal to swiftly act on their complaint against what they said were stringent guidelines that make it virtually impossible for farmers to avail of a government program that allows farmers' groups to import rice during times of insufficient rice supply.

In a statement, Jess Simon, one of the leaders of the Provincial Farmers Action Council (PFAC), said the National Food Authority guidelines "defeat the purpose" of the President's "Farmers as Importers of Special Rice" program because of its "bias" against farmers' cooperatives.

The President launched the program in her state-of-the-nation address last year in a bid to dismantle rice cartels and prevent unscrupulous traders from flooding the market with imported rice.

The NFA ruled that farmers' groups that would avail of the program have 15 days within which to secure letters of credit from the Land Bank of the Philippines before they could import rice.

The PFAC statement said the period was too short because no farmers' group is capable of acquiring loans for a letter of credit in 15 days.

They also assailed the "first come, first serve" policy of the NFA saying big traders could use this to register fake farmers' groups and corner the ceiling for rice importation.

In a rally held early this week, the farmers' groups said big rice traders managed to corner most of the allocation for rice importation as a result of the NFA guidelines.

The PFAC said it has documents to show that some farmers' groups that availed of the rice importation quota were merely dummies or fronts of big rice cartels.

It was estimated that the country has to import at least 800,000 metric tons of rice this year to replenish supply and prevent possible shortage in the event of war between the United States and Iraq.

"On behalf of all farmers' organizations, we are appealing to President Macapagal to please step into the issue and order the NFA to modify its guidelines which will promote the interests of small farmers instead of the big rice cartels," the statement quoted Simon as saying.

Zambales clashes kill 2 soldiers, 18 rebels

IBA, Zambales—Two Army soldiers were killed while five others were wounded in continuing clashes that started on Saturday between government soldiers and communist rebels in the boundary of Zambales and Tarlac, Army reports on Tuesday said.

Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, Armed Forces vice chief of staff and commander of the Army's Northern Luzon Command, identified the slain soldiers as Staff Sgt. Elias Quijano and Cpl. William Diniego.

Wounded were Staff Sgt. Bayani Cabonilla, Sgt. Allan Allen, and Pfc. William Cerquina, Edwin Talicas and Ernie Tugab. They were taken to the Army hospital in Camp Aquino in Tarlac City.

Garcia said reports indicated that the New People's Army rebels numbering more than 100, who fought two battalions of soldiers, also suffered "heavy casualties."

Initial reports gathered by the INQUIRER showed that at least 18 rebels were killed in the clashes but no police or Army official could confirm this.

Garcia said the firefight started at 2 p.m. Saturday at Sitio Carrited in Barangay Cabauatan in Botolan, Zambales.

He said soldiers from the Army's 24th Infantry Battalion moved in on the area after residents reported the presence of NPA rebels in a camp set up in the village.

He said the attack on the NPA camp forced the rebels to withdraw toward Sitio Aliban in Botolan, near the Tarlac border.

At the boundary, soldiers blocked the retreating rebels. This resulted in another clash that lasted until Sunday night, Garcia said.

In Camp Olivas, police commands in Bulacan, Zambales and Tarlac were placed on "heightened alert" after police and the Army confirmed intelligence reports on the plan of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA to hold a plenum in the region in March.

According to a Feb. 3 memorandum from Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon, Central Luzon police director, the plenum would be held near the boundary of Rizal province and Norzagaray, Bulacan. *Tonette Orejas with a report from Cesar Villa, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

DepEd takes cue from Habitat in repair of classrooms

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The Department of Education is borrowing a page from the successful Habitat for Humanity project to repair, redeem or even build classrooms without costing the government a centavo.

Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus said DepEd is designating May 14 to 19 as National School Building and Maintenance Week to repair community schools through community donations and by tapping the carpentry skills of the schoolchildren's parents.

"We believe that the task of education is basically a community undertaking, and that task and that responsibility cannot be left entirely (with) the national government," he said.

"The most concerned really (are) the parents . . . (who need to know) what happens in education. So we want to give them an opportunity to be able to tap (their) resources," he said.

De Jesus said the government is unable to finance all school repairs required throughout the country, even when it gets P106 billion from the 2003 national budget.

Around 90 percent of the budget is appropriated for the salaries of some 500,000 government teachers.

"In terms of textbook requirements, we are much better off in the department than in terms of classroom requirements," he told Benguet teachers, principals and department officials on Thursday.

The DepEd's resource problems reflect a crisis of education, which straddles a "trade off between access and quality," De Jesus said.

"The reality is our (government's) priority has really been access (for all Filipino children and youths to free education). (And we had) sacrificed quality," he said.

De Jesus said the dire need for classrooms is "something parents should think about."

"How much can we push access and at what point do we say we can't have anymore students? . . . Because to accept would be to the detriment of the students already (enrolled)," he said.

Enrollment has remained steady, said Dr. Judith Binay-an, Benguet schools supervisor.

In Benguet, public elementary enrollment figures remained at 56,000 for the last few years, while public high school enrollment remained at 26,500.

De Jesus said he was impressed by the concept of Habitat, which mobilizes volunteers to build modest houses for the poor.

Habitat's key supporter, former US president Jimmy Carter, had visited the Philippines to help build shelters for the country's poor.

"The idea of this National School Building and Maintenance Week is to mobilize the community and the private sector to assist in putting school buildings and classrooms back in shape for the next school year. The department will not provide money for this," De Jesus said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

DOLE chief orders break-up of strike

BAGUIO CITY—Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas has directed police officials in Mankayan, Benguet, to break up a six-day-old strike at the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp. (LCMC) mine site in the town.

But a 50-member police team, led by Chief Insp. Joseph Bayongasan, Mankayan police chief, was confronted early Friday morning by a human barricade, composed of 1,000 LCMC union employees and their families.

The 1,526-member Lepanto Employees Union (LEU) and the 160-member Lepanto Local Staff Union (LLOSU) struck on Feb. 2 over policy that compelled them to work on holidays.

The unions might have violated an order from the Department of Labor and Employment, which had placed their labor conflicts directly under Sto. Tomas' jurisdiction, a DOLE official said.

Sto. Tomas' order, served Thursday morning, advised the LCMC security force to break up the strike, said Flor Fajilan, the firm's spokesperson.

"Management felt it could not do that without resorting to violence, so we are staying out of it. The police were tasked with handling this situation," Fajilan told the INQUIRER by telephone from Mankayan.

"But the police will not touch the barricade either, so it is a stand-off. We are not negotiating with the miners because we feel that the strike was illegal. When (Sto. Tomas) issued her assumption order, it was to signal the unions and the management to cease any activities regarding this labor conflict," he said.

The unions submitted their notices of strike on Dec. 26 last year.

According to the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), which is supporting the strike, the LEU and LLOSU members voted to strike on Jan. 24 in defiance of the DOLE assumption order.

Although not affiliated with major trade unions, LEU and LLOSA got their lawyer from the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU). *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

DOJ OKs probe of graft in country's jail system

JUSTICE Secretary Simeon Datumanong has given the go-signal for the investigation of Bureau of Corrections (Bucor) Director Reynaldo Macala for alleged anomalous deals in the bidding and award of about P264 million in food and supplies last year in the country's penitentiaries.

Acting on formal complaints filed with the justice department, Datumanong also directed Undersecretary Ramon Liwag to look into the veracity of the allegations that bribe money from prominent prisoners changed hands for special privileges.

Liwag, the undersecretary in-charge of the Bucor, referred the complaints to the DOJ's technical staff for evaluation.

Bucor has supervision over the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa, the Correctional Center for Women in Mandaluyong, and the penal colonies in Davao and Mindoro.

Also being looked into are allegations that Macala's relatives are responsible for the smuggling into the NBP of illegal drugs and liquor, among others.

Reacting to the formal probe, a ranking DOJ official said the order was unnecessary. "What Secretary Datumanong should do is simply fire Macala," the official said who spoke on condition of anonymity. The Bucor director is a presidential appointee.

"He can tell Macala to resign now, or put him under floating status," the senior official said, adding that Macala must take the cue that "if your boss has no trust in you, you cannot anymore be effective."

"And firing Macala should be done now, not later," the official also said, to give Datumanong a free hand in reorganizing Bucor.

Reporter's 'killer' disappears; judge issues warrant of arrest

PAGADIAN CITY—A local court here issued an arrest warrant against PO1 Guillermo Wapile, the alleged gunman in the May 13, 2002 killing of broadcast journalist Edgar Damalerio.

But it took an intense lobbying before President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Department of Justice by local and international media organizations before the arrest warrant was issued against the accused.

As this developed, the INQUIRER learned that Wapile had already gone into hiding after he was sacked from the service early this month.

PNP Director Gen. Hermogenes Ebdane in the same order dated Jan. 3 also dismissed city police director Supt. Asuri Hawani for his alleged involvement in the Damalerio murder.

Earlier, relatives of the slain journalist filed administrative and criminal charges against Hawani.

In the arrest order, Executive Judge Franklyn Villegas of the Regional Trial Court of Zamboanga del Sur, said Wapile's right to post bail was forfeited because the crime he has been accused of was a capital offense.

Lawyer Friolo Icao Jr., local chief of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), confirmed that Wapile had gone into hiding, days before the arrest warrant was issued.

"It seems (that) he has contacts inside the judiciary, because he knew ahead of an impending issuance of the (warrant)," Icao said.

He said the policeman also brought along with him his government-issued M-16 Armalite rifle and a .45 cal. pistol.

Wapile was positively identified by at least two witnesses as the man who shot Damalerio.

Damalerio, a radio commentator of the government-sequestered Radio Philippines Network-dxKP here, and managing editor of the weekly Zamboanga Scribe, was waylaid while on his way home from a press conference.

The Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists, a group of media organizations, said in a statement "police are clearly protecting a murderer."

"It is evident that they are not interested in prosecuting this case. We cannot let another journalist killer go scot-free," said the group in a statement. *Hernan de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Iloilo execs' debate fans radio rating war

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The much-awaited debate between Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas and Rep. Augusto Syjuco (Iloilo, 2nd District) has fanned a fierce rating war among radio stations here.

The two politicians decided to debate after they traded accusations on nepotism and graft and corruption since last week.

Bombo Radyo will host the debate to be held at the Audio Visual Room of West Visayas State University at 5:30 p.m. today. But rival radio stations were not happy that dyFM Bombo Radyo solely organized the debate. They decided to boycott the media event.

The competition to stay on top of the airwaves has already been bitter here, with rival radio stations aiming to dislodge Bombo Radyo from the top slot.

The Iloilo chapter of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP), through its chapter chair, Eddie Laczi, said four AM stations, several FM stations and two TV stations would not cover the debate.

Laczi, the station manager of dyBQ Radyo Budyong, said the KBP members reached the decision on Feb. 6 after Aksyon Radyo of the Manila Broadcasting Co. (MBC) complained to the KBP about the debate's arrangement.

Syjuco had been publicly challenging Tupas to a public debate.

ROUNDUP

Zambales mayor convicted

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales—The Sandiganbayan has ordered the arrest of Mayor Romeo Lonzanida after it sentenced him to 80 years imprisonment for falsification of public documents. In a six-page resolution dated Jan. 21, Associate Justice Rodolfo Palattao said the court found Lonzanida guilty of faking tax declarations in 1996. Lonzanida filed two motions for reconsideration and a separate motion for new trial but these were rejected by the court. "(Lonzanida) continues to commit perjury even after his conviction by alleging facts, which are not borne out by evidence, such as the claim in the second motion that one of the accusers (former municipal treasurer Romulo Abad), withdrew his testimonies against Lonzanida," the resolution said. Gov. Vicente Magsaysay directed Vice Mayor Lugil Regadio to act as mayor.

Cesar Villa, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Saringaya awards

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Bicol has launched its 3rd Saringaya Award to honor various entities and individuals that continuously extend support to DENR programs and projects in the region. DENR Bicol director Oscar Hamada had instructed the provincial and city environmental and natural resources officers to identify support groups or individuals within their jurisdiction that may be cited for the award. Evaluation and validation of this year's entry will be in March while the final selection is set for the last week of May.

Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

12th PNP day

LEGAZPI CITY—The Police Regional Office 5 celebrated the Philippine National Police Anniversary Day Thursday with different activities lined up for the occasion. On Monday, the PRO5 held a "Linis Bayan" program with police officers cleaning their areas of responsibility. The 5,000-strong PNP personnel also launched on Wednesday a tree-planting activity dubbed "Isang Pulis, Isang Puno."

Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Calapan water crisis

CALAPAN CITY—Residents of Barangays Uno and Sta. Isabel who are protesting a water supply project in their areas were threatened with arrest as a result of an injunction order dated Dec. 5, 2002 issued by Regional Trial Court Branch 40 Judge Tomas Leynes. The judge asked Col. Jovito Palparan, 204th Infantry Brigade commander, to assist the police in implementing the order and to "make the necessary arrest and detention of those persons who will disobey and resist the injunction."

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Valentine treats

A UNIQUE place combining a spa and café in Tagaytay City is offering couples a treat for Valentine's Day. The treat is offered to couples who would visit the Nurture Tropical Spa & Café in Tagaytay City from Feb. 8-23. A five-course Valentine dinner will be served with wine in a garden setting. The place also offers body massage and foot spa services. A couple can also stay overnight in authentic Ifugao huts. For details, call 830-2421 or 810-2024 or visit www.treasures.com.ph/nurture.

200 lose homes in fire

SAN PABLO CITY—About 200 residents were rendered homeless after fire razed at least 28 houses in Barangay III-C here last Tuesday. City Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino said the Platon Elementary School Building was used as an evacuation center for the families. Other victims, however, preferred to take temporary shelter in their relatives' homes. The mayor offered financial assistance of P5,000 to the victims while clothes and food were provided by the City Social Welfare and Development Office and the San Pablo City Red Cross Chapter.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

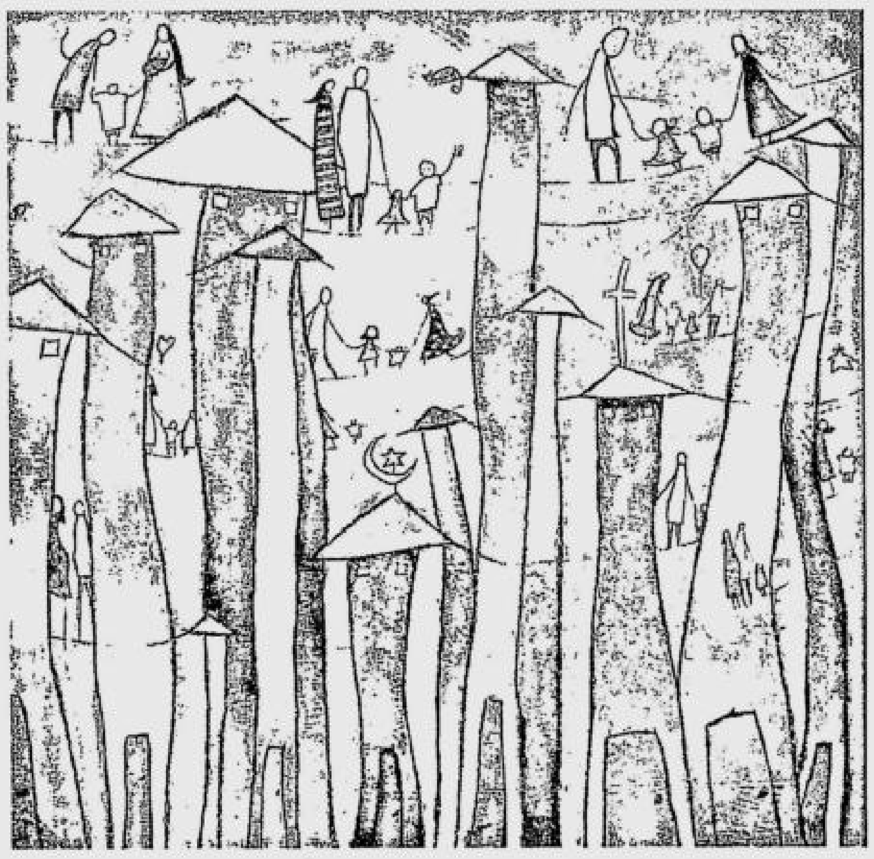
Religious items stolen

MAJAYJAY, Laguna—Burglars took some P500,000 worth of centuries-old religious antiques at a 422-year-old church here, local authorities said. Reports reaching the INQUIRER showed that the suspects, who are still at large, stole the three-foot tall centuries-old statue of St. John the Baptist, the two-foot tall statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the head and two hands of a statue of St. Rita which were owned by the San Gregorio Magno Parish Church in this town. In previous years, the old churches of Pangil, Pakil, Calauan, Paete, all in Laguna, and several others were also victimized by burglars. None of these robberies have been solved, Church authorities admitted.

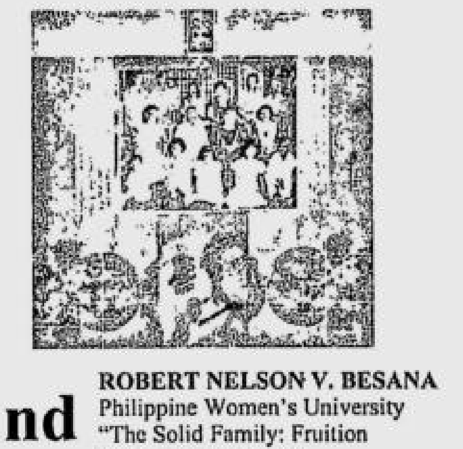
Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Portraits of The Family as Winners

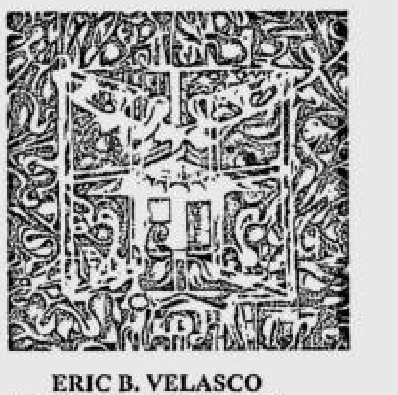
Congratulations to the winners of the 2003-2004 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directory Cover 17th Visual Art National Competition



Grand Prize
ALLAN JAY BALASI
Far Eastern University
"I Belong to One Big Happy Family"
29" x 29" Oil on Wood

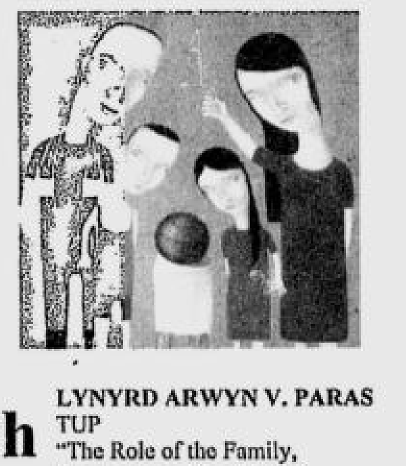


2nd
ROBERT NELSON V. BESANA
Philippine Women's University
"The Solid Family: Fruition into a Solid Society"
29" x 29" Mixed Media



3rd
ERIC B. VELASCO
Bulacan State University
"Isang Puso, Isang Isip, Isang Bansa, Buong Mundo…Iisang Pamilya"
29" x 29" Oil and Acrylic

4th
JOVEN MANSIT
UP Diliman
"Family Tree"
29" x 29" Oil and Acrylic



5th
LYNYRD ARWYN V. PARAS
TUP
"The Role of the Family, the Answer of the World"
29" x 29" Oil on Canvas

1st Honorable Mention
Edwin Ladrillo
FEATI University
"Hues and Values in Family Life"
29" x 29" Oil

2nd Honorable Mention
Serbrave Singh
University of Northern Philippines
"Sanctuaryo ng Pag-ibig"
27" x 27" Water Color

3nd Honorable Mention
Rexell Livelo
Philippines Women's University
"True Love Begins at Home"
29" x 29" Mixed Media

With The Family as this year's contest theme, 8 young aspirants emerged as winners. To have their art grace the covers of the 2003-2004 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directories. Come and admire the family in art form at the Ayala Museum, Makati Stock Exchange Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City, from February 6 to 28, 2003.

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INQUIRER Visayas

Editor **Jun Bandayrel** ◎ *Bureau Chief* **Edralyn L. Benedicto**

A HUGE crowd attend Iloilo City's first public celebration of the Chinese New Year held at Iznart Street, which is also the city's Chinatown. LARICELE JABATAN

Iloilo celebrates Chinese New Year

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Iloilo City

FOR the first time since the Chinese settlers arrived in Iloilo 500 years ago, the Chinese New Year was celebrated here on Jan. 31, thanks to the local government who finally gave them the recognition they deserved.

A huge crowd turned up at the city-sponsored public celebration that featured a food festival and recognition of the contribution of ethnic Chinese to local culture and politics. Iznart Street, the city's old commercial district, which happens to be this city's Chinatown, was decorated with red and yellow bunting, red lanterns and kiosks selling the best of Chinese and Ilonggo cooking.

There were dragon and lion dances, songs, a medley of dances from various tribes in China and an exhibit of Wu Shu martial arts rendered by students from Iloilo Central Commercial High School and Sun Yat Sen High School.

A burst of fireworks and firecrackers to welcome the Year of the Ram entertained thousands of ethnic Chinese and Ilonggos.

Leaders of the Chinese community here thanked the city government, led by Mayor Jerry Treñas, for organizing the event.

"From among us there is a warm feeling of belonging to a community that accepts us as one of them," said Fanny Uy, president of the Iloilo Multi-Sectoral Business Organization.

Sanctuary

Henry Chu-suey, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Panay, said the older generation of Chinese considers Iloilo a "refuge and sanctuary."

"We know no homeland other than the Philippines, or Iloilo City," he said.

Iloilo has the third largest number of Chinese business establishments, trade and schools, next to Manila and Cebu, according to John Omohondro in his 1981 book "Chinese Merchant Families in Iloilo." He traces the Iloilo Chinese connection to the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) when trading between China and early Filipinos started.

Pre-Hispanic grave sites in Oton, 7 km from here, have yielded Sung and Ming porcelains brought by Chinese traders in exchange for local products like beeswax, abaca hemp, sea shells, and red "sibukaw" dye.

Local historian Rex Salvilla said trading took place at the ancient ports in Araut (now Dumagas), Salog (Jaro), Tabucan (Molo), Ogtong (Oton) and Guibuangan (Guimbal).

The Chinese settlers did not arrive until Spain begun colonizing Iloilo in the 16th century. Pursuant to the Spanish Royal Decree in July 17, 1679 issued by then Governor General Juan de Vargas, the local Chinese established themselves inside "parian," or a Chinese district, in what is now Avanceña Street in Molo, this city.

Salvilla said the Chinese presence in Molo gave rise to many Chinese surnames there like Locsin, Lacson, Consing, Ganzon, Quimsing, Conlu, Uygen, Tiongson, Tionko and Layson, among others.

In the 19th century, when Iloilo was opened to international trade through textile and later sugar imports, Chinese settlers started taking active part in trading and export-import business, said Salvilla.

From China came silk and cotton threads which local weavers used in "jusi" and "sinamay" weaving in some 5,000 weaving looms in southern Iloilo.

Iloilo became the textile center of the Philippines then. During the American colonial rule, the Chinese in Iloilo continued to control business, especially sugar trading.

According to Omohondro the present Chinese Ilonggos are immigrants or descendants of migrants from Fukien and Kwangtung provinces. Fukienese comprise about 80 percent of the local Chinese population. The rest are Cantonese, Swatow and Shanghai Chinese. They came to Iloilo to trade, join their relatives or escape political persecution.

Iloilo City Rep. Raul Gonzalez, who spoke during the Jan. 31 celebration, said the local Chinese have stuck it out in Iloilo, even if their fortunes rose and fell.

At the outbreak of World War II, the Chinese formed the Anti-Japanese Patriotic Group and fought side by side with the Filipino guerrillas.

Influence

Through the years, the Chinese influence has filtered into the Ilonggo culture and vice versa. Salvilla said the Hiligaynon culture borrowed many Chinese words like "apian" (opium), "king ki" (oil lamp), "tong" (bribe). The Chinese difficulty in pronouncing letter "r" in "Kinay-a" gave rise to many words like "wala" ("wara" or none), "ilong" ("irong" or nose) and "haluk" ("haruk" or kiss).

Iloilo's popular dishes, La Paz batchoy and Pancit Molo were Chinese-inspired.

The Iloilo Chinese have become major players in the city's economy and politics, putting to doubt claims that they are only concerned about making money, said Diosdado Cadena, provincial director of the Department of Trade and Industry here.

In 1991 Chinese businessman staged the first known anti-tax protest after former city mayor Rodolfo Ganzon, himself of Chinese descent, said he will go after business establishments who have tax arrears. The mayor also threatened to inspect stores for violation of laws on labor; sanitary and welfare benefits as well as their failure to get mayor's permit-to-operate. The Chinese business community said the move was meant to harass them and foment anti-Chinese sentiment.

Rivalry

But Omohondro said the Ilonggo Chinese are far from homogenous. They are a fractious community torn by loyalties either to mainland China and Taiwan, although they are cautious to openly declare them.

The community has two competing chambers of commerce, Chinese schools, and fire fighter brigades. The rivalry between the two schools was for a time so bitter that, according to Omohondro, no marriage could take place between the alumni of Sun Yat Sen High School and the Chinese Commercial High School. Some Chinese who are disgruntled by either group went on to form a third group.

But the city government's move to hold a public celebration of the Chinese New Year, gives recognition of the Chinese contribution to Ilonggo culture. An appeal for them to unite and rehabilitate the old commercial district along J.M. Basa and Iznart streets may help heal rivalries and sometimes sectarian concerns of the Chinese community.

Taming a mountain

By Alex V. Pal
Dumaguete City

ON weekdays, Bong Jubac, the reigning off-road racing champion in Dumaguete, can be seen at any of the two branches of the family-owned Connie's Restaurant, which sells roasted pig and other native foods.

But he cannot be found on weekends because, chances are, he is with his friends in the 4x4 Fun Club, taming a mountain.

But, which one? That is hard to say for this group of outdoor lovers who have climbed all mountains in Negros Oriental with their four-wheel drive vehicles.

Jubac and buddy John Cabrera started off-roading in 2001.

"It started as a male hobby. Men are usually attracted to motorcycles, guns or vehicles. But for us, we decided to be in four wheels because we find it the safest activity of all," Cabrera said.

"It's fun. You feel the acceleration, the thrill of riding uphill and downhill and of overcoming obstacles," said Jubac, who roams the countryside with his blue modified Suzuki Beaver.

In their two years of off-roading, Jubac and Cabrera, along with the 14 other members of their association, have joined competitions that brought them to as far as Bukidnon and Butuan provinces as well as the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Butuan, Ormoc, Bacolod and Iloilo.

Jubac, however, noted that in the races that he had joined, off-roading has become like a family activity.

"It's like a jamboree where whole families come together for fellowship," he said.

Inspired by this idea, the members of the 4x4 Fun Club in Negros Oriental will be introducing the sport to their mates.

"Most of us are married so we thought of letting our wives experience the thrill of off-roading so that this could become a family activity," Cabrera said.

Tomorrow, they will host the Valentine's Fun Run Off-road competition at their improvised racetrack at Claytown Subdivision in Barangay Daro, Dumaguete.

"This will be an easy race track because this will be an introductory track for people who haven't tried the sport yet," Jubac said.

BONG Jubac (left) and John Cabrera exchange off-road stories. ALEX V. PAL

'Tactical Plan'

BACOLOD EXCHANGE

Ninfa R.Leonarda

THE ANNOUNCEMENT that President Macapagal-Arroyo had declared a ban on the carrying of firearms outside their residences, even by those who have permits, was met with approval by a large segment of the community.

However, there seemed to be some backtracking on the issue lately. As a result, the police here also announced that exemptions would be given to those whose lives are under threat.

Now it is expected that more and more gun mongers will be claiming to have received threats so they can be exempted. Where we used to have do-it-yourself incidents called "hold-up me" or "kidnap-me," watch out now for "threaten me."

* * *

Another decision of the President that has also gotten wide acceptance in Bacolod City and Negros Occidental is the return of English as medium of instruction. It has been noted that the protests against it largely come from the Tagalog-speaking regions. In the Visayas and Mindanao, and most especially in provinces like Cebu, Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental, many people still do not understand fully nor can they speak fluently in what they insist on calling, not a "National Language," but just plain "Tagalog."

Meantime, education, especially higher education and vocational education, continues to be a major concern in this city and province.

Only recently, the program called "Project Free" undertaken by the University of St. La Salle and sponsored by former Ambassador Eduardo Cojuangco and his family produced a bumper crop of master's degree holders in the province's District IV. The project consists of scholarships for teachers taking up graduate studies that would mean higher qualifications for their jobs, as well as higher pay.

And then last week, the Technical Skills Training Center established by Sugar Workers Foundation Inc. of the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters, also proudly handed out certificates of completion to their first batch of 153 graduates. The group had completed courses in welding, electrical, automotive and computer skills. The students are dependents of sugar farm workers. Guest speaker Sen. John Osmeña pledged help for the expansion of the center and its facilities.

* * *

In the province, meanwhile, residents lauded the move of Gov. Joseph Marañon to move out the displays of the Negros Museum that had taken over the main areas of the Provincial Capitol building, considered one the most beautiful and historic edifices in the country.

A new site has been provided for the museum while the governor's office, now housed at the Provincial Administration Center, which is adjacent to the Capitol building, is moving into the Capitol, where it should properly be. Reconstruction and renovation works are ongoing, and Negrenses are waiting to see the restoration of both the building and the provincial government to its natural role.

* * *

While Marañon and his provincial board members are pacing themselves very sedately, their counterparts in Bacolod City continue to be embroiled in charges, countercharges and the most reprehensible controversies.

Last week, the Sangguniang Panlungsod was in an uproar over the discovery of a document entitled "Tactical Plan" that had obviously been inadvertently included in a report from the Mayor's Office. The "Plan" that had been drawn out in detail, covers the acts to be taken by some barangay leaders and their men designed to pressure the Sanggunian into passing the budget for 2003 that the mayor, Luzviminda Valdez, had submitted.

Because the target date had already passed, and it was apparent that the orders in the "Tactical Plan" had been implemented. The City Council led by Vice Mayor Ramiro Garcia and Councilor Archie Baribar called the careless insertion an act of Divine Providence.

Quick as a flash, Valdez tried to turn things around, denying knowledge of the "plan," and claiming it was the work of the councilors who were out to destroy her.

Some careless spirits must, indeed, be working within Valdez's offices.

Before the expose´ of the "Tactical Plan," another incriminating document had also been found in a proposal she had sent to the Sanggunian, seeking authority to move City Hall to the Reclamation Area. The same spirit must have mischievously slipped in a dissenting opinion from her own Legal Officer that the councilors got hold of.

When she was still a councilor, her staff also forgot to remove a handwritten note from the pointman of former mayor Alfredo Montelibano, giving her specific instructions on what to say and do during a council session. So far, nobody has yet suggested some exorcism rites in the poor woman's office.

The controversial budget was at last passed, but the Sanggunian, noting that several millions of pesos were being sought by the mayor for what she described as "unfilled positions," promptly slashed off the amount. Only to find out later that the positions had already been filled up, allegedly with wives, children and relatives of mediamen.

And the city also faces possible cut-off of electricity after failing to pay its November and December 2002 bills.

Peso breaches P54-mark

From page A1

bank forecast continuing gradual depreciation for the peso, before the currency tumbles to an all-time low when the United States attacks Iraq. Soon after, the official said, the peso-dollar rate will then stabilize.

"If the BSP was not intervening now it could go past P55 easily," the bank official said.

The official noted that there was pressure for the peso to depreciate against the greenback because there weren't enough dollars in the market.

He noted that exporters and overseas Filipino workers were holding on to their dollars.

But the central bank said it did not intervene to support the weakened peso, but traders said the Bangko Sentral was responsible for as much as 50 to 60 percent of yesterday's volume.

"Let me say that our exchange rate policy remains allowing market forces to essentially determine the value of the peso," Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco said, when asked if the monetary authority had sold dollars to support the peso, which closed at P53.94.

In a statement headlined "BSP warns against dollar hoarding," the Bangko Sentral noted unusual demand for US dollars that may have been caused by concerns over tension in the Middle East.

Under BSP rules, dollar transactions over $5,000 must be fully documented.

Acting Central Bank Governor Alberto Reyes reminded banks to ensure strict compliance with monetary rules and said violators will be fined and penalized administratively. "If necessary, the names of the violators will also be made public," he said.

In August 2001, the BSP named and penalized nine banks found speculating against the peso.

"We are also re-activating our roving team of examiners to audit active forex traders on a daily basis until necessary," Reyes said.

ANALYSTS forecast a continuing gradual decline of the peso due to the looming war in Iraq and domestic concerns like the budget deficit and politics.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Volume doubled

Some traders said the central bank sold at P54.10, accounting for 50 to 60 percent of the turnover of $156.5 million, which was nearly double Thursday's volume of $81.5 million.

But a trader from a foreign bank said the peso could drop to P54.75 within the month despite the warning against speculation.

"There are so many negative factors hounding the peso. In the near term which is within the month, the potential target is P54.75. Yesterday, the warning of the BSP was effective but we don't know how long it would last," the trader said.

A dealer with a local bank said: "We still see strong pressure on the peso because of the same issues—a war in the Middle East and domestic concerns like the budget deficit and political issues."

"It's panic buying and even with the central bank's intervention yesterday, there's heavy demand for dollars before close."

But another analyst said he believed the regulator merely flexed its influence to convince banks to sell some dollars.

Psychological level

The dollar extended its gains against the peso when it breached the psychologically important P54 level for the first time since July 2001. It hit a midday high of P54.100 after opening at P54. It closed at P53.94.

Tetangco said the central bank was ready to provide the market with dollar liquidity to prevent sharp fluctuations in the exchange rate.

"The central bank can participate in the forex market to smoothen sharp movements in the exchange rate," said Tetangco, refusing to comment on questions about specific BSP actions.

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the central bank reserves remained at "a comfortable level, which can cover any expected demand for dollars."

"If at all, the current weakness of the peso is temporary. Be that as it may, (the BSP) assures us that it is prepared to take the necessary steps to maintain the stability of the peso," he told reporters.

Reyes said he was "reminding banks with foreign currency deposits and affiliated forex corporations that circulars dated Aug. 9, 2001 and Jan.21, 2002 are still in effect. In essence, these circulars order banks to fully document all transactions exceeding $5,000."

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the government will not abet speculative practices.

"We will look unkindly at foreign financial institutions who will be found adding to the pressure on the peso. We would consider these violations when choosing underwriters for our borrowings. We are monitoring the movements not only here but also their offshore transactions," said the finance chief.

Deputy Governor Tetangco refused to confirm or deny the central monetary authority's intervention in the market.

Traders' concerns

Aside from the US-Iraq crisis that is pushing local importers to scramble for dollars to pay for imports such as crude oil, the peso is also weighed down by lingering concerns over the budget deficit and the pending amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

The BSP and the Bankers Association of the Philippines have cautioned that without the amendments to Republic Act No. 9160, the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force would impose economic sanctions that would affect the country's $8 billion in overseas workers' remittances.

"Remittances are always a factor in keeping the peso stable. We hope the peso would not be severely hit," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura had said in an earlier interview. Buenaventura is in Australia attending a seminar.

The BSP believed the peso would average between P53 and P53.50 this year, well within the government's forecast of P52 to P54. Financial markets, however, expect the peso to slide between P55 and P60 in the coming months. *With reports from Reuters, AFP, AP; and Dona Pazzibugan*

GODMOTHER to Sheena Rose, the President visits mother Rosalyn "Ka Lorena" Cocoy and child, the President's 101st grandchild, at the V. Luna Medical Center.

VAL HANDUMON

Former NPA rebel's baby is GMA's . . .

From page A1

President arrived, Cocoy talked to reporters about her baby girl and her 3-year-old first-born, Sunshine, whom her parents were taking care of.

"I simply want my girls to have a good future and I hope President Macapagal will help us," Cocoy said as she breastfed her infant.

Cocoy's dreams for her children are the stuff that other parents also wish for: college education, decent jobs, peaceful lives.

"I like them to finish schooling," she said.

It appears that Cocoy may have to raise her two children alone: her husband Sonny has remained in the hills.

"Sonny doesn't want to come down. He's happy there," Cocoy said.

Cocoy surrendered after giving up on the hardships of a rebel life.

"You don't have freedom there because you're always on the run," she said. "Life can't be normal that way."

High school activist

Cocoy joined the underground when she was a high school student and spent seven years there.

It was her who recruited Sonny, now 28.

In a separate interview at the hospital, Orbon said that his brigade has been employing Cocoy now "to convince our people about the evils of communism."

"She helps us explain the futility of armed struggle and the need to work with the government," Orbon said.

He noted that Cocoy has helped so far in the surrender of 200 rebels and their sympathizers in Rizal.

Tight timetable

Orbon is working on a tight deadline given him by President Macapagal: clear the Calabarzon (Calamba, Lagun a, Rizal and Quezon) of communist rebels before the end of the year.

Orbon's brigade employs "special operations teams" that visit people in remote barangays to counter the propaganda efforts of the NPA's "armed propaganda units."

Cocoy is dependent on the "support" being given by the military for her livelihood.

When asked about her long-term plans, she said: "It depends on what they (the military) want. I'm now with them," she said.

Cocoy said she had no regrets turning her back on the communist movement.

"There is freedom here," she said. "Besides, my daughters won't be growing up as rebels."

Bush considering Green Berets to fight Abus

From page A1

He added: "We are discussing future cooperation on counter-terrorism with Philippine allies as part of our security relations. We've been providing the Philippines with training and equipment. All that has been re-focused on counterterrorism over the last couple of years."

The elite Green Berets and other American troops are in the Philippines only in an advisory capacity as part of the Balikatan joint military exercises under the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).

The US Department of State recently tagged the Abu Sayyaf a foreign terrorist group. Earlier it said the group had alleged links with the al-Qaida, which is believed responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001.

The American and Philippine Presidents have forged close cooperation on antiterrorism through phone calls. Bush has also invited Ms Macapagal for a state visit, set for April 2.

In his invitation letter delivered Jan. 17, Bush said: "We will continue to provide assistance and training to the Armed Forces of the Philippines to eliminate with finality the threat from the Abu Sayyaf group and other terrorist elements."

The Congress Daily, which is published by the National Journal Group Inc., reported the "furious pace" of negotiations between Ms Macapagal and Bush and also advisers from the White House, the state department and the Pentagon.

But it also reported that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld had raised "a series of questions" in reviewing the plan to deploy Green Berets to fight with Filipino soldiers in dangerous areas. And a former US official pointed out to the INQUIRER on Feb. 5 that Bush had not yet approved the plan.

Gen. Delfin N. Lorenzana, defense and military attaché at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, said the current terms of agreement of the VFA do not allow American forces to engage in combat in the Philippines.

But he told the INQUIRER: "It does not need legislation to change this, just a revision under the terms of agreement and a briefing to Philippine lawmakers."

Recently, some 600 US Marines arrived in the Philippines to take part in counterterrorism exercises in Subic, Zambales. About 400 additional American troops will start joint military exercises in Basilan later this month.

Last year 1,200 US troops, including over 600 US Special Forces troops and support units, took part in a joint antiterror training program with Filipino combat troops in Basilan.

The United States' military presence in the Philippines is increasing as part of its efforts to fight terrorism, including the "weapons of mass destruction" supposedly stockpiled in Iraq and the looming nuclear threat from North Korea.

Asked whether North Korea would be a topic in the scheduled Feb. 19 meeting between Rumsfeld and Philippine Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, the Pentagon's Davis told the INQUIRER: "Absolutely, if Secretary Reyes wants to talk about it."

The two countries are allies, he said, and "there's plenty to talk about."

Noting the "deepening US military commitment in the Philippines," the Congress Daily cited the visit to Manila of Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, US Army chief of staff, to discuss the antiterrorist campaign.

Shinseki left Manila Feb. 4 after holding closed-door meetings with Ms Macapagal and American officials Karen Brooks, head of the Asian Desk in the White House National Security Council; Mary Thigh from the office of Rumsfeld; and Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone.

The joint campaign against terrorism calls for stepped-up sharing of intelligence information and tightening of border security, including 24-hour monitoring by the Philippines of its eight international shipping ports. The effort also requires the passage in the Philippine Congress by next week of the amended anti-money laundering bill to disrupt the flow of money for terrorists.

Hueys

The United States is also expected to deliver more excess defense articles (EDA) or surplus items to the Philippines to aid in its counterterrorism campaign. Three more Huey helicopters will supposedly arrive in the Philippines next month, under an agreement reached during the US visit of President Joseph Estrada, Ms Macapagal's predecessor.

Shinseki is retiring "about a thousand Hueys this year," according to Lorenzana, who said he would be "happy to have a hundred more Hueys for the Philippines."

But during his term, Philippine Ambassador to the United States Raul Ch. Rabe pointed out that under the EDA program, North Atlantic Treaty Organization members, Japan and US states, among others, had priority over the surplus items.

Lorenzana, however, expressed optimism on the matter and said the Hueys were necessary to win the war on terrorism.

"We need them for mobility purposes, for transporting Filipino soldiers to the field so they will be combat-fresh, as well as for bringing the wounded to safety," he said.

Go home, RP staff told

THE PHILIPPINES has sent home non-essential staff at its embassy in Iraq.

"We authorized the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad to exercise [its] discretion," Foreign Secretary Blas Ople told reporters yesterday.

He said the Philippine mission there was now manned only by essential staff headed by Charge d'Affaires Grace Escalante.

Ople also said there was no plan to evacuate the 60,000 Filipinos or embassy staff working in nearby Kuwait at this time. *AFP*

Sulu Siamese twins inspire interfaith caring

From page A1

lusty cries and the vibrant kicks of normal babies. They're like "healthy babies" with lustrous hair and strong grip.

The girls were born with a combined weight of 11.66 lb, or 5.33 lb each. But Baby 1 (Zhinshiela) had a slightly bigger head (32.5 cm) and longer at 48.5 cm. Baby 2 (Chinshiela) is slightly smaller and shorter, but stockier. She also has a cleft palate.

"They are clinically and medically OK. No problem, except that you need three nurses to bathe them," said Dr. Wilhelmina Hocson, a pediatrician at the Western Mindanao Medical Center in Zamboanga City.

Hearts, livers fused

Initial physical examination on the babies indicated "two hearts and two livers" but the organs "appear fused," Hocson said. The fusion of the organs could complicate a surgical operation to separate the twins, she said.

On their first day, Hocson detected heart murmurs in one girl. Two weeks later, the murmurs had become palpable in the other twin.

"They need more extensive examination. They need to have an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) to see the condition of the organs," Hocson said.

Bad luck for Tausogs

"According to Tausog beliefs, my daughters are bad luck. But for me, they are my lucky charms," the twins' father, Ben, 22, said in Filipino, beaming proudly at his daughters.

"Look, they look like me. We even have the same fingernails," the gushing father announced.

Ben and his teenage wife Nadzrah were unfazed by the "stigma" of having sired a set of conjoined twins. But in deference to the Muslim beliefs of the paternal and maternal grandfathers, who are both policemen, Ben has requested that their surnames be withheld.

Ben, who is from Maimbung, was studying at the Sulu State College when he fell in love with schoolmate Nadzrah. On Feb. 14, 2002, they eloped. Their parents had them married in May.

Nadzrah had an "unusually big" abdomen during pregnancy. But in Jolo, the doctors could not detect the twin birth. Worried about her "too big stomach," Ben brought his wife to Dr. Livia A. Sana, a Muslim obstetrician-gynecologist at the WMMC.

"My examination showed she had twins, but not Siamese twins," said Sana.

First Siamese twins

Nadzrah delivered by cesarean section. Sana was surprised to pull out a pair of Siamese twins. "My first Siamese twins in 18 years of practice!" she said.

It was Sana who called on the Tzu Chi Foundation which counts Christian volunteers among its members. They trooped to the hospital to look at the babies and convinced the parents to allow Tzu Chi to help them.

"We had to assure them that they will not be converted to Buddhism or Christianity," said Anton Lim, executive director of the Tzu Chi Foundation in Zamboanga City.

Tzu Chi mean relief and compassion.

No matter

In Jolo, Ben said, his twin daughters were already dubbed "salot."

"We have different beliefs. Some said they will bring bad luck. Others said it's okay. But it doesn't matter to me. They are my daughters," he said.

Best of all, the twins have brought together men and women of different faiths to work hand-in-hand in a manner never before seen in the history of Southern Philippines.

GI falls for Pinay, deserts US Army

From page A1

his post in South Korea to join his girlfriend in the Philippines has been arrested and will be deported to the United States to face court martial proceedings.

Russel Andrew Mink, 22, was arrested on Thursday afternoon by Bureau of Immigration agents in Barangay Niog I, Bacoor, Cavite, where he was staying with his girlfriend, Anna Medina, and her son.

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo said Mink had been in the "wanted" list of the US Army since last year for desertion.

Mink, a weapons load crew member in the US Air Force, was detailed in Kunsan, South Korea, where he met Medina, who worked at the Pacific Club near the US base. When her contract expired, Medina went back to the Philippines.

Mink filed a leave of absence so he could visit Medina here. He left his post in Kunsan last September and did not not go back.

Domingo said the US Army had canceled Mink's passport, which made him an undocumented alien and a fugitive.

Citing US Army intelligence reports, Domingo added that Mink was trying to get a visa for Medina and her son so they could go back with him to South Korea. The visa application and Mink's request for an extended leave of absence were both refused due to restrictions on US military personnel.

A native of Knoxville, Tennessee, Mink will be deported next week to face court martial proceedings for desertion. He is now detained at the BI central office in Intramuros, Manila. *With reports from AFP*

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DSA

US edges closer to war

From page A1

viewing a biological weapons scientist—the first such interview without Iraqi officials present since the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441 on Nov. 9.

UN spokesperson Hiro Ueki confirmed that the scientist had agreed to give the interview.

In Washington, DC, the Bush administration stepped up its diplomatic offensive, with US President George W. Bush declaring "the game is over" for Saddam Hussein, Secretary of State Colin Powell briefing US senators and administration officials turning up the pressure on skeptical allies like France, Russia and Germany.

Minton said the division included about 16,000 soldiers and 270 helicopters, including the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter, the UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook transport helicopters, and the OH-58 Kiowa Warrior armed reconnaissance helicopter. He did not say how many troops were called for in the deployment order, nor specify the country to which they would deploy.

"Our primary mission is to conduct operations using air assault technique, that is rappelling out of helicopters," Minton said. "We're a rapid deployment force. We have the largest aviation brigade in the United States Army."

Large force

The elite air assault division, based in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, began moving helicopters and a liaison team to the Port of Jacksonville at Jacksonville Naval Air Station earlier this week to prepare to load the aircraft onto ships, Minton said.

The deployment comes as the United States assembles a large military force in the Gulf region for a possible war with Iraq. US defense officials say about 110,000 US troops already are in the region, with tens of thousands more set to arrive by the middle of the month. Three aircraft carriers are already within striking range of Iraq: the USS Abraham Lincoln and the USS Constellation in the Gulf, and the USS Harry S. Truman in the Mediterranean Sea. A fourth aircraft carrier, the USS Theodore Roosevelt, set sail for the region on Tuesday.

New resolution

Yesterday, Bush indicated he would welcome a new UN resolution on Iraq—but only if it will make clear that the world body was ready to use force if Saddam refused to reveal and give up weapons of mass destruction as demanded in an earlier resolution.

"The UN must not back down," Bush said. "All the world can rise to this moment."

"Saddam Hussein will be stopped," he said, warning anew that the United States will act alone if needed.

At the United Nations in New York, the Iraqi representative, Mohammed al-Douri, said of Bush, "It sounds like he wants a resolution for war."

"Saddam Hussein was given a final chance," Bush said, referring to the resolution approved unanimously in November by the Security Council that launched new UN inspections. "He is throwing that chance away," Bush said.

But he was silent on a timetable.

Iraqi scientist

The interview with the Iraqi scientist came just two days before chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix was due in Baghdad ahead of a crucial Feb. 14 report to the Security Council on the degree of Iraqi compliance with UN disarmament demands.

A source at Iraq's National Monitoring Directorate (NMD), which acts as liaison with UN inspectors, named the scientist as Sinan Abdel Hassan Mohyi, a biologist who currently works at the NMD.

Saadi, Saddam's adviser, dismissed as "fiction" Powell's presentation to the United Nations, including the "orders attributed to our president." He noted that this, like other allegations Powell made, had been corroborated only by unspecified sources.

Powell's presentation was "intended mainly for the uninformed to persuade them, for war preparations, and to undermine the UN bodies" charged with implementing UN disarmament resolutions. "The purpose of the show that went on inside the Security Council was mainly for home consumption, for the uninformed," Saadi said. He added that Iraq would provide the Security Council with a detailed, written refutation of Powell's accusations.

Said al-Mussawi, a former UN ambassador who now heads the international organizations department at the Iraqi foreign ministry, also denied any links between Baghdad and Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, identified by Powell as a key member of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

"We have no links whatsoever with Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi," he said, adding that Zarqawi was currently in the Western-protected Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq, which has been off limits to Baghdad since 1991.

Senate briefing

Earlier yesterday, Powell told senators at a hearing that a key to winning Security Council support would be a two-day visit to Baghdad this weekend by chief weapon inspectors Mohamed El-Baradei and Hans Blix.

Diplomatic prospects, Powell said, hinge on whether Iraq displays "a serious change of attitude and the commitment to comply that one can believe in."

Ousting Saddam's regime could fundamentally reshape the Middle East in a positive way for the United States and its allies, Powell said. He told the Senate Foreign Relations committee that such an outcome was likely, particularly if, after a war in Iraq, progress was achieved in forging peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Asked to consider the disturbances and a possible backlash that could be unleashed by a US invasion of Iraq, he said he believed such an impact could be managed. "Even though there may be some difficulties in the days of a conflict or even in the months after a conflict ... there is also the possibility that success could fundamentally reshape that region in a positive way that will enhance US interests, especially if in the aftermath of that conflict we are also able to achieve progress on Middle East peace," Powell noted. *Reuters, AP, AFP*

SIDELIGHTS

His word could trigger war

Hans Blix, the 74-year-old Swedish lawyer summoned out of retirement, may be the man whose word will persuade the 15-nation UN Security Council to back an invasion of Iraq.

As the chief weapons inspector of the United Nations, Blix will have to judge if Iraq meets council demands on disclosing its weapons of mass destruction.

Tough and calm, Blix is a stickler for rules and walks a fine line between Washington's drumbeat of war and the natural UN inclination to turn swords into plowshares.

His Jan. 27 report bolstered the US case for military action by saying Baghdad had not come to a "genuine acceptance" of its disarmament obligations in failing to answer crucial questions on its chemical and biological arms programmes.

"Our job is to be factual and I am sorry that the facts were not better," he said, insisting that any questions of war and peace were not his decision but that of the council.

But at the same time he has qualms about war and his possible contribution in facilitating it.

"We are perhaps 250 or 300 people on the inspection side. We cost about $80 million a year," Blix said. "If you take the armed path, you are talking about $100 billion, you're talking about 250,000 men, you're talking about a lot of people killed and injured, a lot of damage." *Reuters*

Powell dossier plagiarized?

Britain said it stood by a controversial intelligence dossier on Iraq, after academics said whole passages had been lifted from magazine articles, complete with spelling mistakes.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell drew attention to a British dossier on Iraq during his presentation to the UN Security Council on Wednesday. The British dossier says it is compiled from intelligence material "and other sources."

Several academics had come forward earlier yesterday, saying they recognized most of the British dossier as lifted, verbatim, from articles published in the "Middle East Review of International Affairs" and in "Jane's Intelligence Review." In some cases, they said, the dossier included punctuation and spelling mistakes copied from the original articles.

"This appears to be obsolete academic analysis dressed up as the best MI6 (British intelligence) and our other international partners can produce on Saddam (Hussein)," analyst Dan Plesch of the Royal United Services Institute said on TV.

But a British government official maintained that the report was accurate and said the government had never claimed all the material was from its spies.

The flap came after the world this week caught an extraordinary glimpse of US spying capabilities through Powell's presentation.

His carefully prepared remarks revealed that the United States can eavesdrop on conversations among Iraqi military officials even in the elite Republican Guard, analysts said. Iraqi officials called the presentation a fabrication. *Reuters*

They're freezing sperm

LOS ANGELES—American soldiers are taking an unusual precaution before heading to the Persian Gulf, fearing that powerful vaccines or exposure to biological weapons might affect their fertility.

They're freezing their sperm.

Sperm banks nationwide have reported an increase in the number of military clients as deployment orders rapidly increase.

"It doesn't protect their life. It doesn't protect them from illness. But at least ... a man can beget a legal heir," said Dr. Cappy Rothman, co-director of California Cryobank.

In Jan. 28 soldiers had their sperm frozen in liquid nitrogen at the company's three sperm banks in California and Massachusetts. That was a sharp increase from the firm's two military clients in 2001, and the 12 in 2002 that lab officials attributed to the deployment of troops to Afghanistan after Sept. 11.

Labs elsewhere in the country also reported increased business.

"It has really picked up in the last few weeks," said Brent Hazelrigg, program director for the Genetics and IVF Institute in Fairfax, Virginia. "We have men who are coming in and producing a specimen and then shipping out the next day."

The firm's three sperm banks in Texas, Virginia and Minnesota saw a total of 12 soldiers in January. In all of 2002, the labs had seven military clients. *AP*

NPA rebs to launch attacks

THE COMMUNIST Party of the Philippines has threatened to launch sympathy attacks if the United States carries out its threat to attack Iraq.

In a statement sent to media offices, CPP spokesperson Gregorio Rosal assailed President Macapagal-Arroyo for "unabashedly supporting [US President George W.] Bush's jingoism" and for her supposed plan "to allow the US to use our soil as launching pad" for aggression.

"We can help shield Iraq by voicing opposition to the US war and vigorously opposing the Philippine government's all-out puppetry," Rosal said.

He said the CPP's armed wing, the New People's Army, would "contribute to this effort by launching tactical offensives against the government troops.

Guingona, Roco urge GMA: Back UN, not US

From page A1

The senator also noted that the Philippines was the only Asian country to openly support the Bush initiatives against Iraq.

"[Other Asian countries] have adopted a policy of silence, not commenting on this sensitive issue. China is not supportive of the Bush position," Arroyo said, adding:

"Why is the Philippines so talkative? What do we get in exchange for that?"

But in Zamboanga City, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes pointed out that the President had yet to declare whether the Philippines would support the United States if it decides to attack Iraq.

He said that as much as possible, the government wanted the crisis resolved through peaceful means.

Reyes said Ms Macapagal might issue a formal statement on the matter after the meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) this month.

"We just have to wait for the decision," he said. "Anyway, the President has assured the nation that whatever action we will take will always consider the national interest."

Arroyo said, however, that in the conduct of foreign affairs, a country must always be guided by self-interest.

Roco said the President's premise of the interests of the Philippines being "identical" with those of any other country should be "re-examined." He said there was no "historical support" for such an idea.

"True, the war against terrorism has no boundaries," he said. "Still, the end does not justify the means. We must always endeavor to protect life, dignity, justice and equal opportunity."

Roco said that with the "drums of war sounding closer," he was submitting his thoughts on the critical issue for the President to consider in deciding on "matters of war and peace."

"No amount of money and war materiel can mitigate the threat to the life, limb, liberty or livelihood of our fellow Filipinos in case of war," he added.

Malacañang is considering sending "peacekeeping" troops to Iraq in support of the US-led war.

"That's possible," National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said in a radio interview yesterday morning. "The President has mentioned [the possibility of sending peacekeeping troops] because we want to help foster peace. If it's a peacekeeping [contingent], we will study that."

Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye also said the government might send a contingent to Iraq as long as it was not for combat.

"This is based on our policy renouncing war," he said in another radio interview. "So if a group would be sent there, definitely it would be a non-combat group."

Both Golez and Bunye stressed that the government would act in accordance with the decision of the UN Security Council on the US-Iraq crisis.

The Cabinet oversight committee on internal security met Thursday afternoon in Malacañang to discuss the Philippines' course of action in case war breaks out in the Middle East.

Golez reiterated the President's position that the NSC and Congress had to approve the sending of a Philippine contingent to Iraq because this would require funding.

But he pointed out that the Palace could act without waiting for Congress' approval. He said it could decide to deploy a "small" contingent from the Department of Health whose expenses would be shouldered by the department.

"All of these still have to be discussed in detail in the Cabinet oversight committee, in the NSC, and finally, if needed, in Congress," Golez added.

The NSC is composed of the President, Cabinet members, Congress leaders and former Presidents.

The meeting set yesterday was postponed until after Feb. 14, when UN chief arms inspector Hans Blix will report on the status of Iraq's compliance with UN Resolution 1441.

Sen. Ralph Recto served notice that the Senate would insert a provision in the 2003 national budget that would prohibit the use of public funds to support the US-led war on Iraq.

Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, said this "budgetary tourniquet" would prevent the executive branch from undertaking action related to the US-Iraq crisis without the concurrence of Congress.

The P804.2-billion appropriation measure is still pending in the Senate.

Recto said the ban would cover the sending of Philippine military contingents and war materiel to Iraq or to other countries that would be used as staging areas for the attack.

Also proposed to be covered by the ban are support services that may be rendered by the Philippine military for combat troops of other nations in transit here on their way to Iraq, he said.

But the use of public funds for the evacuation and relocation of overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East and support for humanitarian activities related to the treatment of casualties is excluded from the ban. *Reports from Donna S. Cueto, Cynthia D. Balana, Doña Z. Pazzibugan, Norman Bordadora and Gerald G. Lacuarta in Manila; Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Alinea elected SCOOP president

VETERAN sportswriter Eddie Alinea of Tempo-Bulletin was elected Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines (SCOOP)president yesterday at the Kamayan-West in Quezon City. Also elected were Tito Talao, also of Tempo-Bulletin, EVP; Ramon Lorenzo (Sports Weekly), VP for print; Cris Daluz (Tumbok/GMA-7), VP for broadcast; Barbette Atienza (Sports Digest), secretary; Rhea Navarro (Daily Tribune), treasurer; and Ed Paez (Remate), auditor.

Sta. Lucia-Alaska tiff opens All-Filipino

By Dennis U. Eroa

ONE-TIME MVP Kenneth Duremdes battles his former team as Sta. Lucia Realty meets Alaska Milk in the opener of the PBA All-Filipino Conference slated on Feb. 23 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Alaska hugged the headlines when it traded the high-scoring Duremdes to Sta. Lucia Realty for a pair of untested newcomers in the recent draft.

Duremdes, 6-foot-3, will give the Realtors a fearsome scoring punch as he will partner with sweet-shooting pointguard Paolo Mendoza in the backcourt.

The Alaska-Sta. Lucia Realty tiff is the only scheduled game as the league celebrates its 29th season. This is also Noli Eala's inaugural conference as commissioner of Asia's first play-for-pay league.

Veterans Dennis Espino and Marlou Aquino remain as Sta. Lucia's pillar of strength. Both will battle Alaska's Ali Peek, Don Allado and rookie Brandon Lee Cablay. Focus will also be on Mike Cortez, the former La Salle playmaker who emerged as this year's top draft pick. Known for his brilliant plays, the "Cool Cat" has been impressive in the Aces' preseason games, but his true worth will be measured come gametime.

Swingman John Arigo, free agent acquisition Don Camaso, Cebuano hotshot Stephen Padilla, Ron Duat and Eugene Tejada will also play key roles in Tim Cone's rotation.

Meanwhile, the PBA Commissioner's office said privilege membership cards are now on sale at special prices. Ringside seats are priced at P6,000; courtside at P4,500 and P3,500 for upper and lower box seats.

Two ringside cards will be given at a discounted rate of P10,000.

Those interested may call Gerry Mesias and Nestor Noblejas at (02) 636-5320 to 21.

DUREMDES

DREAM COME TRUE

Chua wins Southern Ladies in Cebu

CEBU CITY—The dream she had last year came true this year.

Heidi Chua, the Wack Wack find only three years ago, won the 40th Southern Ladies Open yesterday at the Cebu Country Club to sweep all three tournaments for lady amateurs this year.

"Finally, my dream came true," said Chua. "I failed last year but I resolved that there's always next year to look forward to."

The 26-year-old Chua shot a 1-over-par 73 to add the Southern Ladies Open to her victories last month in the Philippine Ladies Open at the Manila Golf Club and the DHL-NGAP Open at Canlubang.

Her expected tight battle for the crown with fellow leader Lora Roberto of Southwoods went to a watery grave when Roberto saw the pond on the par-4 6th and three-putted from 40 feet for a 7.

NGAP president Rod Feliciano awarded the trophies and prizes to the winners, including Del Monte's Maribel San Miguel (nearest the pin), in the much-applauded tournament sponsored by PAL, the Philippine Sports Commission, DHL Worldwide Express/WWW Express, Marriott Hotel-Cebu, Petron, San Miguel Corporation, Smart Communications, Mitsubishi Motors Phil., Nike, Hidden Spring, Perrier and Gopez Corporation.

The 23-year-old Roberto, who was leading Chua by one stroke before that skid, skied to an 80 and finished third in the Championship Division behind Carmelette Villaroman (69) and deposed champion Canlubang's Lina de Guzman (75).

"I am a bit sad but this is not the end of the road for me," said Roberto, who gave Chua some rough time by sharing the lead with the Wack Wack hot shot the first two days of this most prestigious lady golf event in the country.

Added Roberto: "I also lost the war in the previous two tournaments after I had led in both. I need to go to the United States as I guess I need more tournaments to toughen up my game, especially the mental side of it."

Roberto picked up the game only six years ago and her skills immediately caught the attention of Bong Lopez, the former national team coach. Lopez is now the coach of Roberto–and also Chua.

Chua came to the nation's golf consciousness when she won the Southern Ladies in 2000 in Pueblo del Oro in Cagayan de Oro in her rookie year. She defended her crown in Bacolod's Binitin the following year before De Guzman dethroned her last year at Del Monte in Bukidnon.

But the setback last year only goaded Chua to resolve to win back her crown–and more.

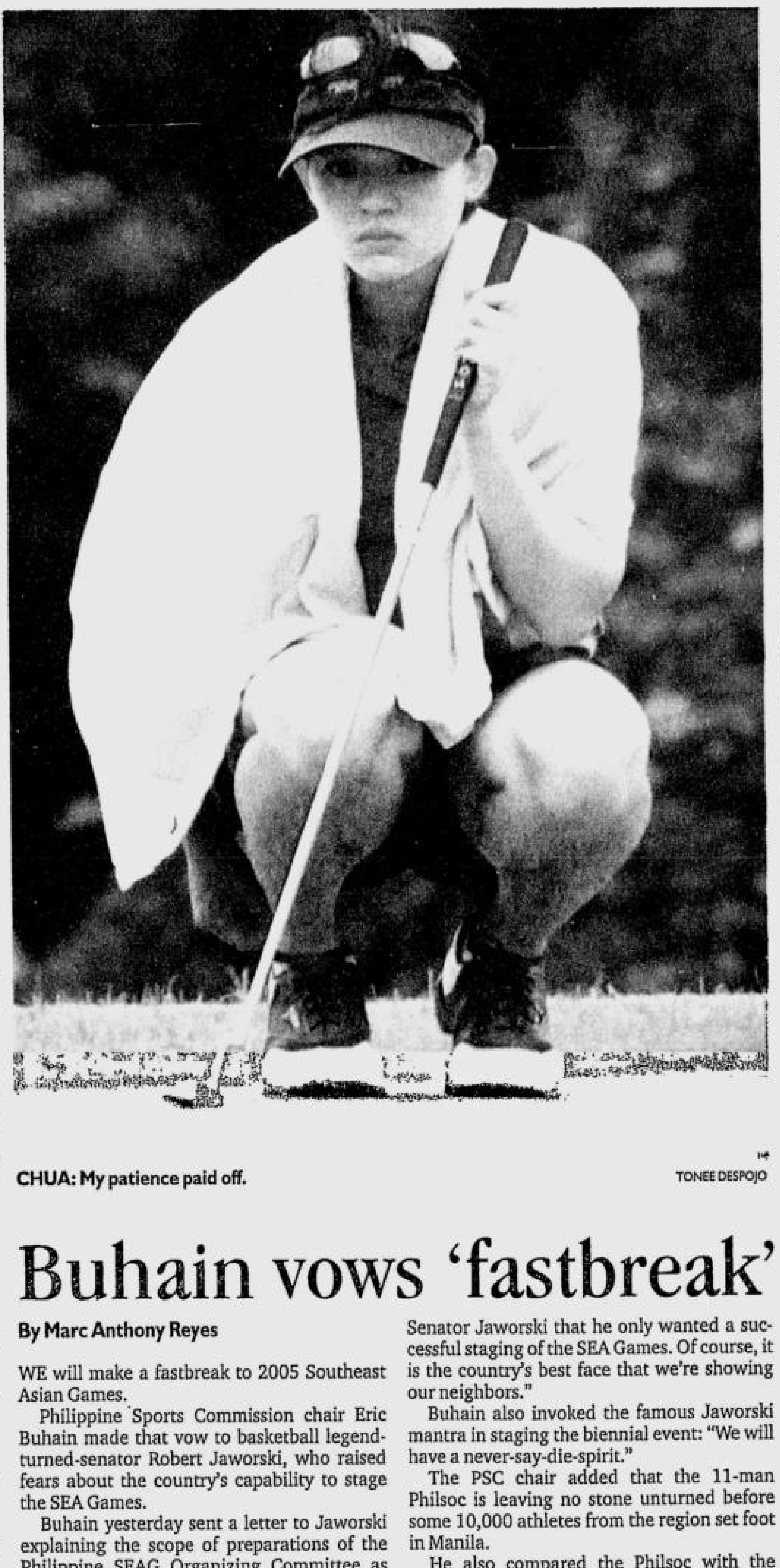
"When I won the Philippine Ladies Open last month despite my roller-coaster game, that gave me the inspiration to pursue the dream," said Chua. "My Dad really gave me words of encouragement to work harder. I'm glad my patience paid off."

Chua will next fly to Thailand for the Kosaido Cup, the Tour for Asian lady pros. Last month, she was invited to the Malaysian leg where she made the cut and finished a respectable 30th.

"That was a tough tournament but I am glad I got an invitation to play there," said Chua. "The experience I gained there and will gain more in the Kosaido Cup will give me the confidence to move on."

After the Thailand leg, Chua said she will proceed to the United States to join the qualifying school in Florida for the US LPGA.

"I wish Heidi all the luck," said Alice Ll. Andrada of the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines. "I'm sure she will scale more heights in her dream to join the LPGA." *ASM*


CHUA: My patience paid off.

TONEE DESPOJO

Other results of SL Open

Championship Divison-Lucy Landicho (Canlubang) 48-46-49=143, Tracy Locsin (Southwoods) 44-49-47=140, Eva Minoza (Del Monte) 47-48-44=139, Stephanie Yu (Wack Wack) 43-40-48=131, Hye Jung Kim (Del Monte) 37-41-35=113.

Class A-Gabby Monfort (NOGCC) 36-48-42=126, Mian Tabanas (Del Monte) 42-43-38=123, Mercy Bejar (CCC) 44-37-37=118, Leni Cabili (Navy) 35-41-42=118, Malta Lustre (NOGCC) 39-39-34=112, Ryoko Nagai (CCC) 38-36-35=109, Glenda da Rosa (Southwoods) 37-35-35=107, Alessandra Cordaro (CCC) 39-27-37=103, Renee Bruyere (Southwoods) 35-31-36=102, Blondie Estacio (Del Monte) 34-36-32=102, Arlette Dizon (Southwoods) 33-35-33=102, Jhay Montelibano (Bacolod) 29-38-34=101, Nenita Guiogulo (Del Monte) 30-33-38=Eva Hino (CCC) 36-31-31=98.

Class B-Rachel Burlas (Mactan) 40-39-41=120, Hilda Badong (Navy) 36-40-37=113, Medy Agustin (Navy) 35-44-33=112, Johanne Reyes (NOGCC) 38-36-35=109, Arlene Villordon (CCC) 36-36-37=109, Yoko Suzuki (CCC) 36-36-32=104, Gena Tongkopanon (Mactan) 38-34-31=103, Ellen Cana (Wack Wack) 30-38-34=102, Elvira Lerner (CCC) 29-36-37=102, Vicky Arellano (Aguinaldo) 34-28-30=92, Celine Menez (Pueblo) 31-32-28=91, Rosita Uy (Club Filipino) 24-31-34=89, Gloria Alazas (Club Filipino) 26-35-28=89, Ada Martinez (CCC) 29-30-27=86, Cynthia Capay (Victorias) 23-28-31=82, Jo Veloso (Club Filipino) 28-26-27=81, Carol Lorilla (Victorias) 27-22-23=72, Maribel San Miguel (Del Monte) 19-22-25=66, Hayley Yu (Pueblo) 23-23-19=65, Brigitte Zafra (Switzerland) 18-19-28=65, Silvina Co (Sharon Woods-USA) 21-16-27=64, Luz Gonzales (Iligan) 17-17-24=58.

Class C-Jeannette Chiu (Club Filipino, winner sudden-death), 30-35-26=91, Ana Roa (Pueblo) 32-30-29=91, Kasuko Maeda (ccc, won coutback) 27-32-29=88, Alice Andrada (Alabang) 32-31-25, Teresita Schaap (Alta Vista) 25-37-25=87, Gloria Domingo (Navy), 30-32-23=85, Baby Ascalon (NOGCC) 28-25-22=75, Nena Gyguani (CCC) 27-25-21=73, Aloma Lopez (Wack Wack) 24-25-24=73, Cecille Mead (Victoria) 22-25-20=72, Vicky Verdeflor (Victorias) 22-25-20=67, Dionne Cu (Wack Wack) 24-23-18=65, Veronica Veloso (Wack Wack) 22-19-22=63, Regina Zulueta (NOGCC) 20-24-17=61, Judith Orimaco (Pueblo) 15-26-19=60, Raquel Bacarisas (Del Monte) 23-20-16=59, Linda Arinzol (Del Monte) 16-21-15=52.

Class D-Joan Castillo (CCC) 23-25-48=78, Emma Bayer (Club Filipino) 24-29-53=77, Rony Perez (Club Filpino) 27-23-50=76, Rosemarie Mendoza (Iligan) 25-21-46=73, Mariko Ikehata 24-21-45=69, Mayette Comique (Del Monte) 17-26-43=63, Rosalind Wee (Wack Wack) 16-15-31=55, Mila Chan (CCC) 14-15-29=54, Asuncion Montelibano (Bacolod) 19-21-40=48, Rosemarie Alba (Alta Vista) 14-12-26=41, Sonia Tordesillas (Victorias) 12-18-30=41, Sale Dy (CCC) 11-14-25=38.

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GOLF: PGA AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, 9:30 a.m. (r) and 4:30 p.m., Star Sports

This is the PGA Tour, 7:30 p.m., Star Sports

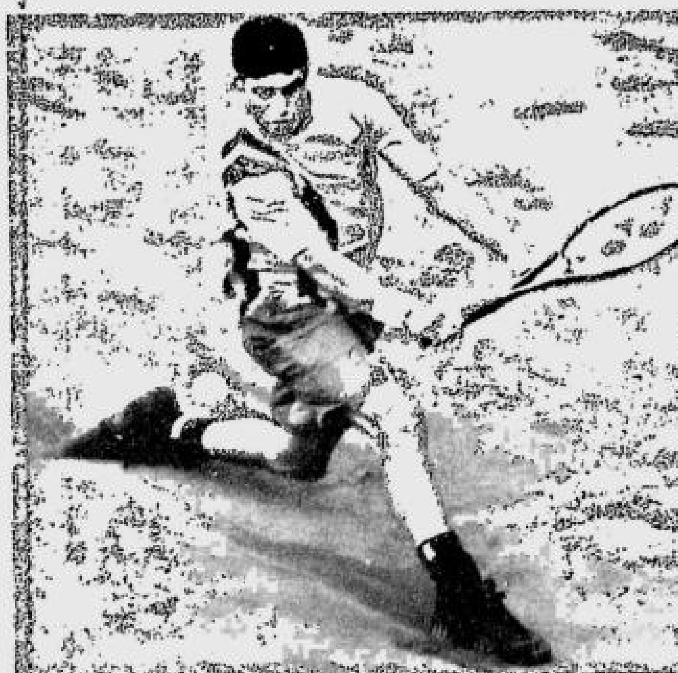
U.S. Open Golf Championship Highlights, 9:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

BOWLING: Aviva Asian Bowling Tour, 12 noon (r), ESPN

POOL: Mosconi Cup 2002, 11 a.m. (r), ESPN

World Professional Pool Championships 2002, 2:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Pro Bowl, 6 p.m. (r), ESPN


DAVIS CUP
World No. 1 Lleyton Hewitt shows the form that enabled him to outclass British left-hander Alex Bogdanovic 7-5, 6-1, 6-2 Friday and give Australia a 2-0 lead in its Davis Cup world group first-round match in Sydney. Earlier, Mark Philippoussis, playing his first Davis Cup match at home in nearly six years, beat Alan Mackin 6-3, 6-3, 6-3. Britain is playing without the injured Tim Henman and Greg Rusesdki.

Buhain vows 'fastbreak' for SEAG

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WE will make a fastbreak to 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain made that vow to basketball legend-turned-senator Robert Jaworski, who raised fears about the country's capability to stage the SEA Games.

Buhain yesterday sent a letter to Jaworski explaining the scope of preparations of the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee as well as asking the senator's all-out support.

"We, in the PSC, understand Sen. Jaworski's position," Buhain said. "The adrenalin in every athlete is so strong that it was evident in Senator Jaworski that he only wanted a successful staging of the SEA Games. Of course, it is the country's best face that we're showing our neighbors."

Buhain also invoked the famous Jaworski mantra in staging the biennial event: "We will have a never-say-die-spirit."

The PSC chair added that the 11-man Philsoc is leaving no stone unturned before some 10,000 athletes from the region set foot in Manila.

He also compared the Philsoc with the Manila SEA Games Organizing Committee of 1991, which was formed only 10 months before the Big City's hosting of the biennial meet—its second since the SEA Games was first held in Manila in 1981.

Incidentally, Buhain was hailed the most outstanding athlete during the 1991 SEAG after winning seven gold medals to help the Philippines capture 91 golds, just one short of eventual overall champion Indonesia for the country's best finish ever in the meet.

"We look up to Senator Jaworski as an idol because of his fighting spirit," Buhain said. "Even during our days as national athletes, he always comes up to mind when we say we'll never die out there. We gave our best and did our best to win, and that's what we are assuring Senator Jaworski, the Filipino will never say die and he knows that's every Filipino's attitude during the most trying times."

Talk N Text backs National Pool A

FOR National Pool A coach Johnny Tam, it's a level playing field in the Six-Foot Junior Basketball Cup starting at 1:30 p.m. Monday at the Lyceum Gym.

His reason: The coaches are required to use all the 12 players in their rosters.

"I think this is an exciting and developmental tournament," Tam said.

Backed by Talk N Text, the National Pool A is considered among the favorites in the six-team field entered in the tournament conceptualized by cage patron and FedEX chair Bert Lina for players who are 18 years old and below and are six feet and above.

Starting for Tam are 6-foot-5 Michael Galinato of Mapua, Melchor Cule, a 6-3 discovery from the Australia Institute of Sports, and 2002 RP Youth members Jonathan Fernandez (6-2) of National University, Hermes Sumalinog (6-2) of Mapua and Kevin Astorga (6-3) of the International School. *Roy Luarca*

POOLROOM BELLES
Champion Cez Marquez (third from left) is shown with the other top finishers of the recent Philippine Women 9-Ball Championship promoted by Rolly Vicente at the AMF-Puyat Bowling Inn, Taft Avenue, Manila. Also in photo from left are Patricia Tan (4th place), Lyka Fernando (2nd place) and Florence Andaya (3rd place). Forty-eight women billiard players competed in the tournament.

DYNAMIC DUO

Kobe, Shaq lift LA

NEW YORK—Kobe Bryant dazzled the New York Knicks with an array of drives, jump shots and dunks Thursday, scoring 46 points to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 114-109 victory over the New York Knicks and their first winning record of the season heading into the All-Star break.

Shaquille O'Neal added 33 as the Knicks had no answer for Los Angeles' dynamic duo. Bryant (40) and O'Neal (28) combined to outscore the Knicks in the first three quarters as the Lakers took a 97-67 lead.

The Lakers (24-23) then survived a spirited fourth-quarter rally by the Knicks to end the first half of the season with their fifth straight win, including four on the road.

The Knicks, who had won seven of their last 10 games, played the second half without leading scorer Allan Houston, who left the game with a bruised right wrist.

Latrell Sprewell led New York with 24 points.

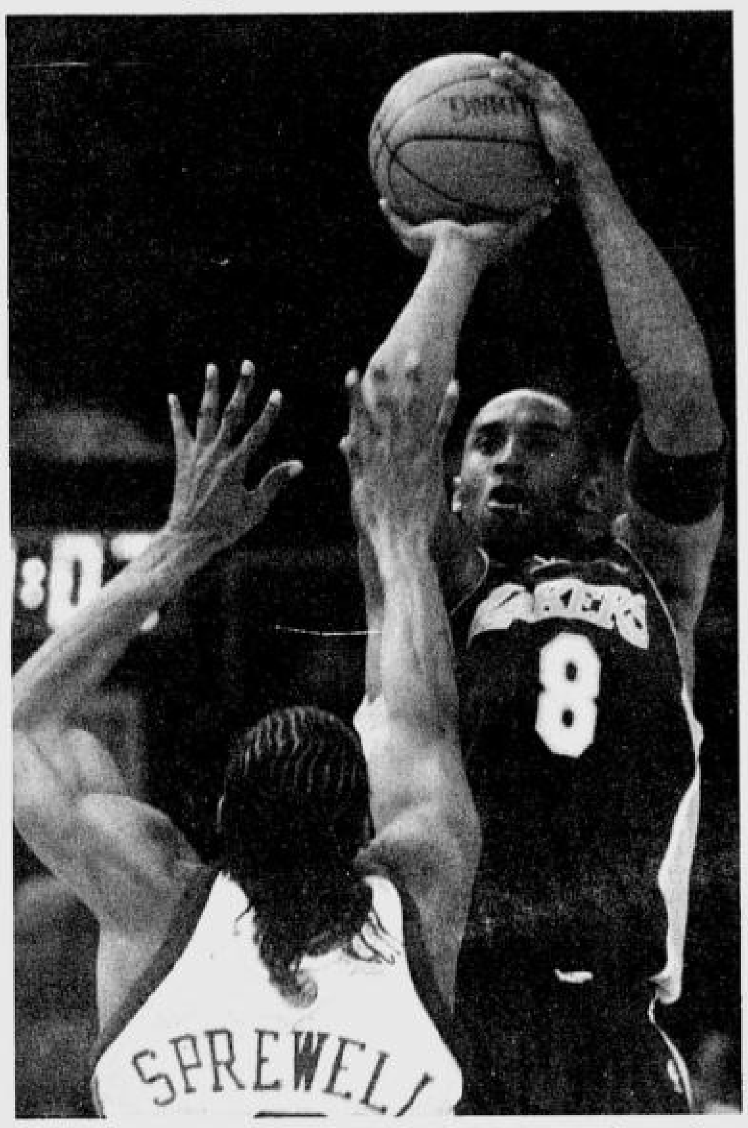
In Milwaukee, Ray Allen scored 14 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter for Milwaukee, sending Seattle into the All-Star break with a three-game losing streak.

Milwaukee goes into the break having won 11 of 14 games.

Allen and Michael Redd, who had 19 points, scored the first 22 points of the final quarter for the Bucks.

COMPLETE RESULTS

LA Lakers 114, New York 109; Milwaukee 97, Seattle 91; San Antonio 83, Denver 74.



LOS Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (right) shoots a three point shot over New York Knicks forward Latrell Sprewell in the fourth quarter of their NBA game at New York's Madison Square Garden, Thursday night. Bryant had 46 points in 41 minutes as the Lakers won, 114-109.

REUTERS

Jordan, Yao Ming main attractions

ATLANTA, Georgia--Michael Jordan is not the superstar player he once was. Yao Ming is probably nowhere near as good as he is going to be.

These two players, whose teams are barely clinging to playoff positions with two months remaining in the season, come together at a crossroads in their careers here in Sunday's 52nd NBA All-Star Game.

The annual showdown of Eastern and Western conference standouts will be the first All-Star appearance for Chinese giant Yao, Asia's first NBA All-Star, and the last All-Star appearance for Jordan, who will retire at season's end.

"It's not a funeral," Jordan said. "It's just the end of basketball."

Jordan, who led Chicago to six NBA titles, has retired twice before his latest revival, this with the Washington Wizards. But this one comes just eight days before his 40th birthday, and after his first All-Star reserve appearance. *AFP*

Woods back to work

NEW YORK--It's time for Tiger Woods to get back to work.

Woods, who spent the last two months recovering from knee surgery, will end the longest layoff of his career next week when he returns to the PGA Tour in San Diego.

"Things are progressing nicely, and I will officially enter the Buick Invitational on Thursday," Woods said on his Web site.

In a conference call last week, Woods reported no pain in his left knee. He played 18 holes for the first time Tuesday with his father and shot 66.

"The real test comes next week at Torrey Pines," he said. "That's when I will find out how the knee holds up in competition and what, if any, effect walking the course has on it."

The Buick Invitational is a good spot for him to return.

Along with having an endorsement deal with Buick, Woods won the tournament in 1999 and has never finished worse than fifth. *AP*

Orchard hosts Junior Golf season series Feb. 9, 23

THE Orchard Golf and Country Club in Dasmarinas, Cavite will host the next two stages of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines school season series on Feb. 9 and 23.

The Sunday tournaments will give local jungolfers the chance to intensify their preparations for the forthcoming summer circuit, according to new Jungolf president Gerry Handog.

"The Orchard management is opening their facilities to our players for two Sundays and this will allow us to check the preparedness of our top players as well as those who have shown a lot of improvement," said Handog.

After the players in the Class A, Class B and Class C divisions were able to size up each other in the initial leg at Villamor, they should be better prepared come the Orchard legs.

Those in the Class D and E divisions will still see action in their regular weekend joust at the executive course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

In one of their recent legs, Miguel Tabuena scored a whopping five-under-par 59 gross, which was one of the lowest scores ever recorded at the pitch and putt facility.

Meanwhile, the members of the national team seeing action in the Asian qualifying of the World Junior Team Championship is set to leave for Thailand via Philippine Airlines tomorrow, Sunday.

They will be going for a slot in the tournament proper in Japan later this year.

MCA tourney attracts 80 teams

ABOUT 80 chess teams have been invited to join this year first quarter leg of the Metropolitan chess Association Amateur League set to reel off at 9 a.m. on Feb. 22-23 at the Lotus Garden Hotel located in Malate, Manila.

Considered one of the biggest local team competitions in the country, the two-day event offers P150,000 in cash prizes.

Early entries include Bol-Anon, PNP, Aspire-IT, SS, Letran, UP, TIP, LEX Corp., DTI, DPWH, PNOC, Philhealth, Nestle-Cabuyao, Paircargo, Agoo Computer College, cities of Valenzuela, Malabon, Kalookan, Parañaque, Lipa, and provinces of Bulacan, Olongapo, Ilocos Sur, Pampanga and Bicol.

For details, call MCC at 826-8560, 0916-852-1069 and 0918-939-3702.

Kevin on top

PEBBLE BEACH, California--As usual, the weather was the talk of the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am — only this year, it's the complete absence of rain, wind and gloom that's bedeviling pros and amateurs alike.

Under a warm sun and windless skies, Northern California native Kevin Sutherland shot a 6-under 66 for a one-stroke lead over Mike Weir and Robert Gamez on Thursday.

Golfers expect weather trouble at Pebble Beach, which made the surprisingly calm conditions nearly as difficult to battle. Sutherland and a few others managed the fast fairways and hard greens — and the tournament's usual six-hour rounds — resulting from the absence of recent rain at the tournament's three gorgeous courses. *AP*

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SPORTSWATCH

Lagon hosting 5-cock derby

YOUTHFUL engineer Sonny Lagon, owner of the new famous Blue Blade Gamefarm in Laguna, will host the "Birthday Special 5-Cock Derby" on Monday, Feb. 10 which will feature at least 60 quality fights. Derby sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Complexor 3000 and Lakpue Drug Inc. Participants are reminded to submit their entries tomorrow, Sunday, Feb. 9, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, please contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341. Lagon said 25 to 30 entries are competing for top honors on Monday. Last Thursday, Lagon and Mayor Joel Brillantes' bet, JBB Blue Blade Copped emerged as solo champion in the "4th UCAP Bumble Bee Balbina/Pandor Magic 7-Cock Derby", by posting a perfect score of seven points. EVMC of Jessie Viceo is runner-up finisher with six points while Wacky Salud of Cebu (Mactan Casino April 11), ambassador Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina) and UCAP president Raymond Velayo and Butch Halili (Arnis Master I) have five points apiece.

Pasay tilt championship tonight

EXCITING cockfighting action resumes at 7 tonight as Pasay City Cockpit presents the "Bigtime 5-Cock Derby" championship round with Sagupaan Super Feeds and Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer as sponsors. According to derby host and former World Slasher Cup champion Dicky Lim, on tap tonight is the 3-cock finals featuring more than 50 fights. A total of 57 top rated entries saw action in the elimination round last night, witnessed by an overflow crowd. Meanwhile, 25 to 30 entries are expected to see action in another 4-cock derby on Feb. 14, with host Lito Alcantara. Entry fee is P10,000 and cash prize at stake is P300,000. For other details, please call 843-1746, 843-1890 and 816-6750.

Women's 'NC' mark established

BOCA RATON, Florida--Jacksonville State University's Shanika Freeman set a women's NCAA college competition record Thursday, making 22 consecutive free throws in a game. Freeman went 22-of-22 from the free-throw line against Florida Atlantic University, breaking the previous single-game mark of 20 successive throws held by two players. Kristeena Alexander of George Mason did it against Central Florida in 1996, while Liz Beggs of Kent State tied the mark against St. Bonaventure in 2000. Freeman, a 1.86-meter (6-foot-1) sophomore center, finished the game with a career-high 42 points on 10-of-17 shooting. *AP*

'El Titan' finalizes $32-M deal

NEW YORK--Jose Contreras has a nickname as sharp as his pitches: "El Titan de Bronze." And, he says, it was given to him by Fidel Castro. Contreras finally made it to Yankee Stadium on Thursday to finalize his $32 million, four-year contract. At his introductory news conference, Contreras said the Cuban president called him "The Titan of Bronze" because the right-hander was the Cuban ace. The nickname originally belonged to Antonio Maceo, the general who led the Cuban liberation army against Spain in the 19th century. *AP*

Tyson needs character test

SYDNEY--Former heavyweight boxing world champion and convicted rapist Mike Tyson will have to undergo a character test if he wants to visit Australia later this month, government officials said on Friday. Australia's former triple world champion Jeff Fenech, in Las Vegas to help Tyson prepare for a Feb. 22 fight against fellow American Clifford Etienne, said he hoped details of the visit would be finalised within the next week. However Fenech acknowledged Tyson's criminal record could count against him being granted a visa to Australia. An immigration department spokesman said all applications to enter Australia were assessed on a case-by-case basis. *AFP*

RACING TIPS

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Race 2--1. Modulo Queen 2. My Prayer
Race 3--1. Prince Nicholas 2. Tiny Giant 3. Naglalabyog 4. Ruby's Folley 5. Ready N Waiting
Race 4--1. Golden Sunshine 2. Verificado 3. Hallmark 4. Crystal City 5. Sekreta
Race 5--1. Stradivarius 2. Despedida 3. Simply Great 4. Better King 5. Ocean Magic
Race 6--1. Free Hand/Wily Waw 2. Joshua Tree 3. Blue Bolero 4. Bulacan King 5. Record Holder
Race 7--1. Peek A Boo 2. Free Again 3. Star Worth 4. Extreme Illusion 5. Inner Silence/Play the Field
Race 8--1. Romario 2. Hummingbird 3. Society's Pleasure 4. Vigor 5. Hong Kong Girl
Race 9--1. Aba Aba Aba 2. King Rick 3. Sir Pierre 4. Expediter 5. Hoy King
Race 10--1. Latin Beat 2. Mrs. Big 3. Shower of Stars 4. Bogart 5. Morena
Race 11--1. Haz It All 2. College Gem 3. Windlass 4. Cherry Lane 5. Loose Cannon
Race 12--1. Heavy Metal 2. Lady Victoria 3. Michael's Way 4. Scene Stealer 5. Maging Matalino
Race 13--1. Magara 2. Gossip Column 3. Tender Value 4. Wings of Gold 5. Sweet Inspiration 6. Classy Babe

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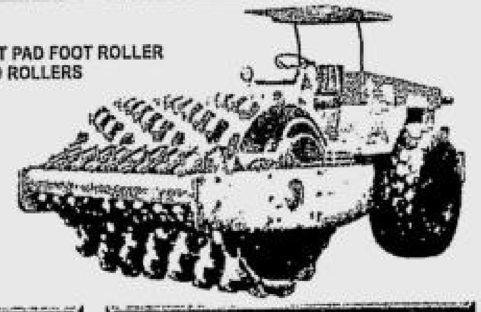

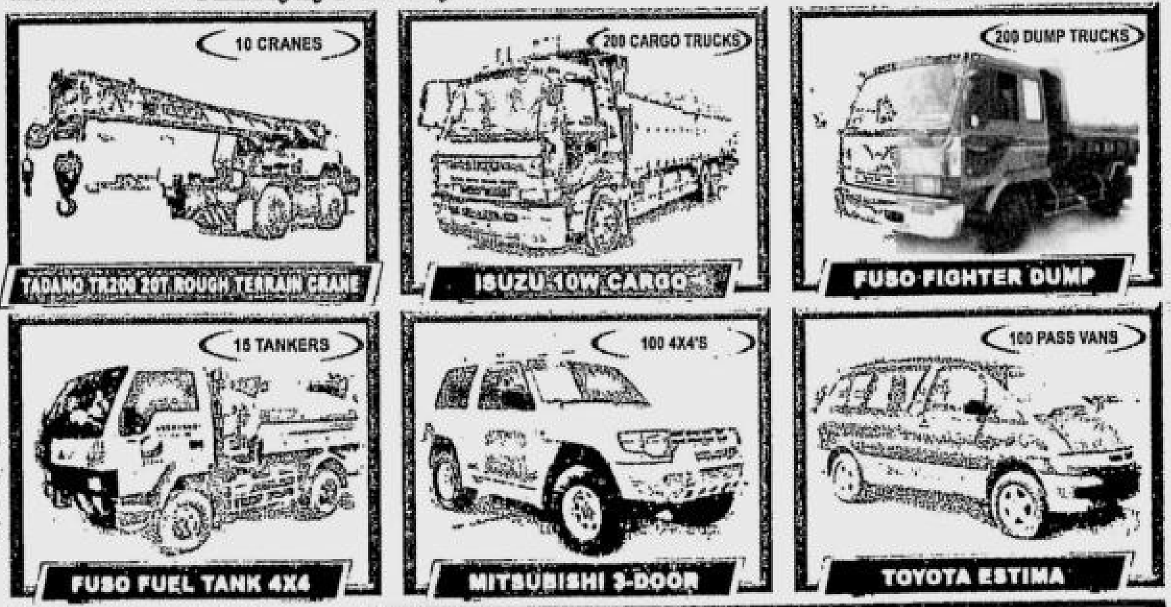

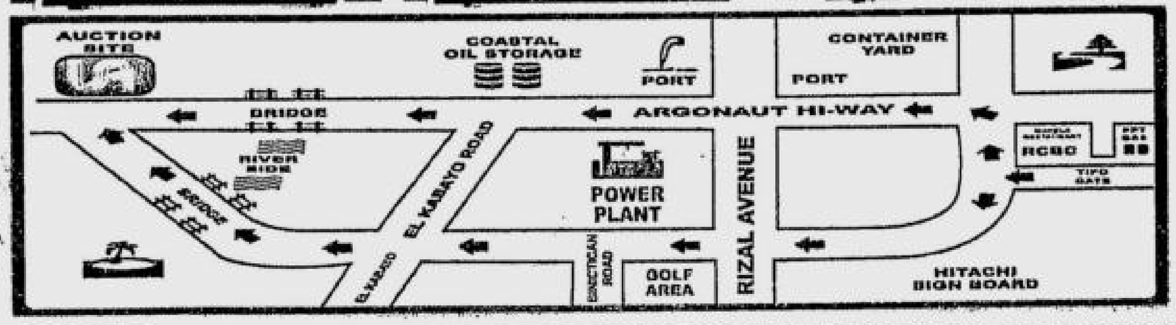

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FGC IN TAGYTAY

Pagunsan prevails by 4

By Jong Arcano

A WIND-SHAKEN Rey Pagunsan completed a wire-to-wire victory with a closing two-over-par 74 yesterday, handing Cassius Casas his third runner-up finish in four weeks in the Tagaytay Midlands stage of the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit.

With his worst score in the week, Pagunsan lost five shots to Casas, who in turn had his best output of three-under 69 in a tournament which turned out to be a test of shotmaking against the natural blows.

But Pagunsan still finished four strokes clear with his 265 aggregate making him the seventh winner of a P100,000 champion's cheque after 10 legs of the circuit revived by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo with the support of San Miguel Beer.

It was only Pagunsan's second career victory and it came more than two years after winning the Southwoods legs of the now-defunct MRT Tour.

Pagunsan later said his Betinardi putter did it for him.

"I've never putted so well in recent years and with it, I just got the confidence however tough the greens are,"said Pagunsan, who had made Japan as his base the past two years but returned home this year to actively campaign in the local circuit.

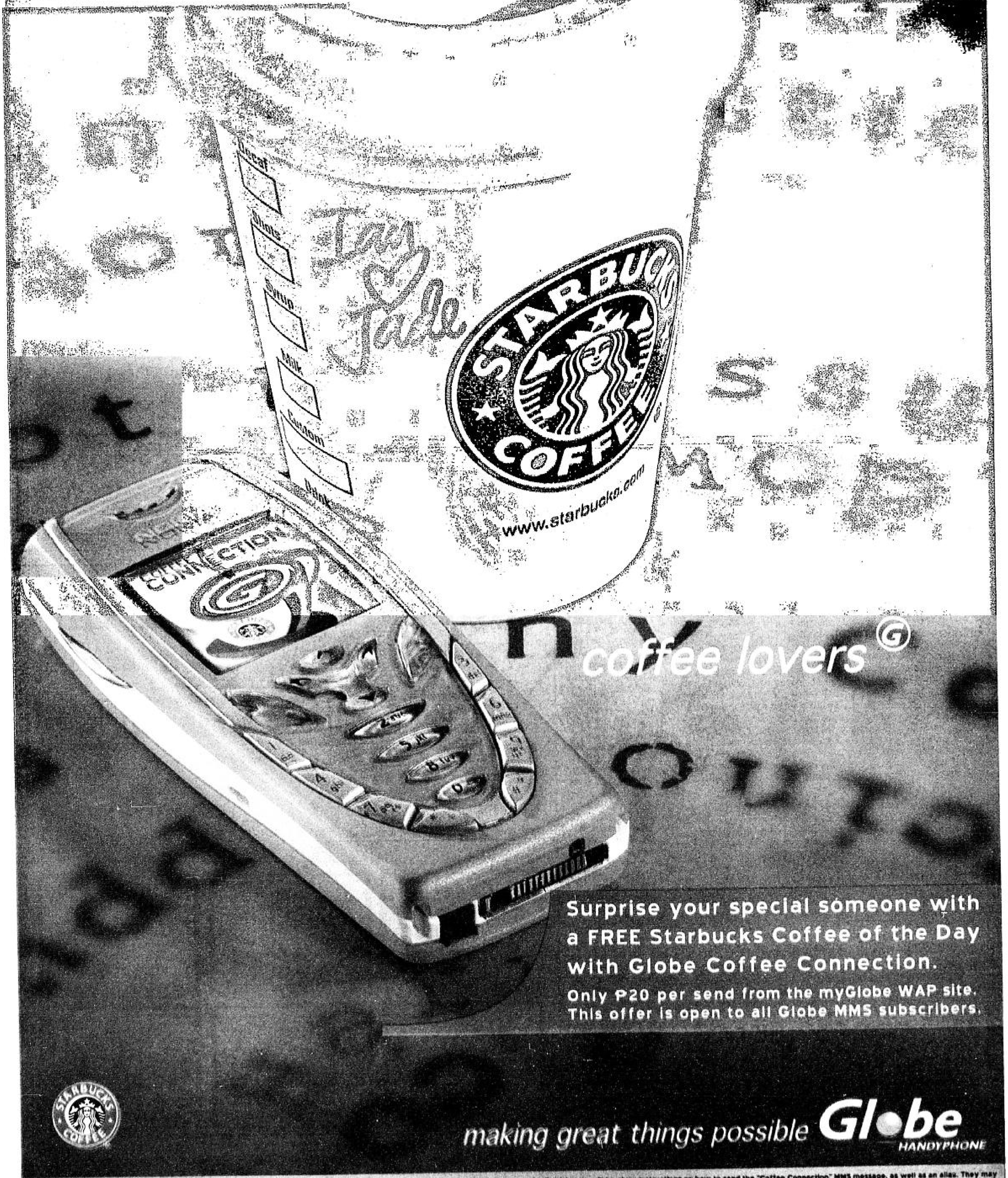
Not even a momentary slip of bogey and double bogey on the 12th and 13th could put his march to victory in danger.

Though he suddenly felt worried as he went three over, Pagunsan recovered his composure with a quick par on the next hole before putting the crown away with a two-putt birdie on the 16th. His bid for a third leg victory stopped, Casas' late charge was just to secure second place this time as the nine-stroke lead he faced before teeing off yesterday was just imposing.

Cookie LaO, playing only his second event after being forced out of the tour by health problems, forged a tie for third with Ruben Sasutil and Richard Sinfuego at 292.2. LaO and Sinfuego closed out with a 75 while Sasutil had a 76.

Final scores:
285-R. Pagunsan 67-71-73-74
289-C. Casas 73-71-76-69
292-R. Sasutil 69-77-70-76;
R. Sinfuego 73-72-72-75; C. LaO 73-73-71-75
293-R. Cuello 74-74-72-73

PAGUNSAN (right) is congratulated by Ruben Sasutil (center) and Richard Sinfuego. ROGER MARGALLO



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   c. Select the myGlobe GPRS link from the available bookmarks.
   d. Choose "Yes" when the "Connection to server needed" message appears.
   e. Click on "Coffee Connection".
5. Participants will be given instructions on how to send the "Coffee Connection" MMS message, as well as an alias. They may choose to reveal their number, or identify themselves as a "secret admirer", "good friend", or "your Valentine". The designated recipient will then receive the MMS message from 2325.
6. Each MMS subscriber is entitled to send only two short cups of Starbucks Coffee of the Day. The third time they try to send the "Coffee Connection" MMS message, they will be informed that they have already availed of the two coffee treats. They will be reminded however that they can still send their loved ones an MMS Valentine's Card.
7. Starbucks Coffee of the Day can be claimed from any Starbucks outlet by showing the "Coffee Connection" MMS message to a barista.
8. The Starbucks barista will erase the MMS message once it is validated. Only MMS messages from 2325 will be honored. The participant who showed the MMS message will then need to sign a receipt with his/her name, mobile number, phone model, and signature for verification purposes. This receipt will be kept by Starbucks.
9. Redemption shall be within sixty (60) days from the end of the promo period.

Duration: February 8-28, 2003 Per DTI-NCR Permit No. [illegible], Series of 2003

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

METRO

Editor Louie C. Camino

AN INTERNATIONAL carrier descends to an airport surrounded by squatters' shanties. ROGER MARGALLO

Parañaque to check terror threat from Naia squatters

By Christian Esguerra

THE IMMINENT threat of terrorists firing at incoming planes from a squatter colony around the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Parañaque has finally caught the attention of local officials.

Rep. Eduardo Zialcita yesterday announced the local government's plan to relocate thousands of informal settlers to a five-hectare property at Parañaque's Global City.

Hundreds of these squatters occupy shanties hobbled just outside NAIA's perimeter near the Multinational Village. Residents fear terrorists could easily position themselves in one of the shanties and shoot down air-

PARAÑAQUE/ A27

Naia for sale

By Abigail Ho and Christian Esguerra

THE PARAÑAQUE government may have won the auction, but the Manila International Airport Authority will not give up the fight.

The Parañaque government gained possession of key portions of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, worth at least P655 million, in a public auction held yesterday.

"I'll preserve the territorial integrity of the airport," MIAA general manager Edgardo Manda said in a telephone interview yesterday. "It's a matter of national interest and national security."

The airport property was put on the auction block after the MIAA allegedly failed to settle its tax obligations to the city since 1992.

Manda also said Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez could be cited in contempt of court by proceeding with the public bidding even as the Supreme Court recently granted the MIAA's petition for a temporary restraining order to hold off the auction.

But the Supreme Court's order came too late in the day to save the airport authorities.

Marquez said that the auction proceedings had been concluded by the time the TRO reached the Parañaque session hall at 1 p.m.

Manda revealed that the MIAA received a copy of the high tribunal's order just yesterday, and that its legal department is now studying what appro-

NAIA/ A27

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5. Unbreakable – Westlife	unbrkable
6. On a High – Duncan Sheik	onahigh
7. Stole – Kelly Rowland	stole
8. Game of Love – Santana & Michelle Branch	gameoflove
9. Do I Have To Cry for You – Nick Carter	cryforu
10. The Scientist – Coldplay	scientist

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8 SUKDULAN
9 BELOW
10 HOT CHICK

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486
1
2
3 (DTS)
4
5
6 (DTS)
Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA ①②&③
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 SUKDULAN
2 I SPY
3 BALAT SIBUYAS

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 I SPY
2 BELOW
3 BALAT SIBUYAS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) HERO
5 SUKDULAN

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 BELOW
2 BALAT SIBUYAS
3 HERO
4 I SPY
5 SUKDULAN
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 ANALYZE THAT
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2010 to13
HERO

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 THE RING
2 HULA MO HULI KO

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515
1 RESERVE
2 BALAT SIBUYAS
3 RESERVE

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 I SPY
2 SUKDULAN
3 BALAT SIBUYAS
4 RESERVE

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
1 (SDDS) HERO
4 BALAT SIBUYAS
5 BELOW
6 SUKDULAN
7 (DTS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8 (SDDS) I SPY
9 (DOLBY) CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508
2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928
1 BALAT SIBUYAS
2 SUKDULAN
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4 (SDDS) I SPY
5 BELOW
6 (DOLBY) HERO
7 (DTS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8 LORD OF THE RING
9 FEMME FATALE

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082
1 BALAT SIBUYAS
2 (SDDS) I SPY
3 (DTS) SUKDULAN
4 (DOLBY) HERO
5 BELOW

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 BALAT SIBUYAS
2 SUKDULAN
3 (DTS) HERO
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5 (SDDS) I SPY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 BALAT SIBUYAS

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 SUKDULAN

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson BALAT SIBUYAS
Lords BALAT SIBUYAS
Jennet

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 HERO
2 SUKDULAN
3 I SPY
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) I SPY
2 HERO
3 BALAT SEBUYAS
4 SUKDULAN
5 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)
1
2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BALAT SEBUYAS
2 SUKDULAN

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MALL CINEPLEX 7
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1 SUKDULAN
2 THE RING
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) I SPY
4 (SDDS) HERO
5 (DTS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7 BELOW

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400
1 BALAT SIBUYAS
2 I SPY

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0826, 834-2185
1 I SPY
2 SUKDULAN
3 (DTS) HERO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 SUKDULAN
2 (DTS) I SPY
3 (DOLBY) HERO
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 SUKDULAN
2 (DOLBY) I SPY
3 (DTS) HERO
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 THE RING
2 HOT CHICK
3 (DOLBY) CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 SPECIAL SCREENING
2 SPECIAL SCREENING
3 (DOLBY) THE RING
4 (DTS) SUKDULAN

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 (DOLBY) THE RING
2 (DTS) SUKDULAN
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) FEMME FATALE
2 BALAT SIBUYAS
3 (DTS) SUKDULAN
4 UNFAITFUL CONCUBINE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) HERO
2 I SPY
3 (DTS) SUKDULAN
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 HERO
2 SUKDULAN
3 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 HERO
2 I SPY
3 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 ANLYZE THAT
2 SUKDULAN
3 (DTS) HOT CHICK
4 (DOLBY) EIGHT MILE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 (DTS) RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 LORD OF THE RING
2 SUKDULAN
3 THE RING

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 SUKDULAN
2 THE RING
3 LORD OF THE RING
4 ANLYZE THAT

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-6001 TO 03
1 (DOLBY EX) I SPY
2 SUKDULAN
3 (DTS ES) TRY SEVENTEEN
4 MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121
1 TRY SEVENTEEN
2 REPLIKATE
3 (DOLBY) I SPY
4 (DTS) ONE HOUR PHOTO

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7 BALAT SIBUYAS
8 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416
1 I SPY
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4 BALAT SIBUYAS
5 HERO
6 HOT CHICK
7 RING (JAPANESE)
8 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
9 SUKDULAN
10 BELOW

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9360749
1 TRY SEVENTEEN
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 HALF PAST DEAD
4 I SPY
5 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6 SUKDULAN
7 HERO
8 BELOW
9 BALAT SIBUYAS
10 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11 HOT CHICK
12 THE RING

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 HOT CHICK
4 HERO
5 I SPY
6 HERO
7 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8 RING (JAPANESE)
9 THE EYE
10 BELOW
11 TRY 17
12 SUKDULAN

SM MEGAMALL
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1 HERO
2 I SPY
3 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4 HERO
5 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6 THE EYE
7 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8 BELOW
9 SUKDULAN
10 THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
11 HOT CHICK
12 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295462
1 BELOW
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 HOT CHICK
4 SUKDULAN
5 THE EYE
6 HERO
7 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8 I SPY

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888
1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2 BELOW
3 HERO
4 I SPY
5 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
7 SUKDULAN
8 THE EYE
9 RING (JAPANESE)
10 BALAT SIBUYAS

SM CITY CEBU
2313876
1 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2 HOT CHICK
3 TRY SEVENTEEN
4 ONE HOUR PHOTO
5 MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
6 SUKDULAN
7 THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
8 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422
1 SUKDULAN
2 CLOSED
3 HOT CHICK
4 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
6 ANALYZE THAT
7 CLOSED
8 BANGKERO

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 I SPY
2 ONE HOUR PHOTO
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4 BANGKERO
5 TRY SEVENTEEN
6 SUKDULAN

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975
1 SUKDULAN
2 I SPY
3 HERO
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302
1 I SPY
2 SUKDULAN
3 HERO
4 BALAT SIBUYAS

SM CITY DAVAO
2978998
1 TRY SEVENTEEN
2 HEAVEN
3 VAMPS
4 HOT CHICK
5 ANALYZE THAT
6 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

SM BICUTAN
776-3055
1 HERO
2 SUKDULAN
3 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4 I SPY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884
1 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2 ONE HOUR PHOTO
3 HOT CHICK
4 8 MILE

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City
633-8976

1 HERO
11:15 FS/11:45 MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END

2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
11:15 FS/11:45 MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END

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7 LORD OF THE RINGS
8 THE EYE
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10 SUKDULAN

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3 BELOW
4 THE EYE
5 SUKDULAN
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7 I SPY

Metro East - Marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8280
1 THE RING (US VERSION)
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 LORD OF THE RINGS
4 I SPY
5 HERO
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7 BELOW
8 SUKDULAN

Novaliches 935- 3229 - 30
1 HERO
2 RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
3 I SPY
4 SUKDULAN
5 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7 BELOW
8 HOT CHICK

Malabon Citisquare 288-0985 / 288-2575
1 HERO
2 SUKDULAN
3 I SPY
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp. 875- 1927 / 961- 5318 / 5270
1 ONE HOUR PHOTO
2 SUKDULAN
3 TRY SEVENTEEN
4 I SPY
5 BANGKERO
6 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Imus 471- 8188 / 875- 3838
1 HERO
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 I SPY
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5 SUKDULAN
6 BALAT SIBUYAS

Sta. Rosa Laguna 049-8370907
1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2 HERO
3 I SPY
4 SUKDULAN
5 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Bacolod 441- 0453 / 0459
1 LORD OF THE RINGS II
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 HOT CHICK
4 ANALYZE THAT
5 SUKDULAN
6 BANGKERO

Iloilo 336- 8077 - 78
1 LORD OF THE RING II
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 HOT CHICK
4 ANALYZE THAT
5 SUKDULAN
6 BANGKERO

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Looting the dead part of police work?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

WHEN ex-rebel leader Romy Kintanar was assassinated, he had with him cash, three guns and other valuables including a set of golf clubs. All of those items were not returned to his family.

His assassins couldn't have robbed him of his belongings because they were in a hurry to get away from the scene.

More likely, according to reports, police investigators and cops sent to secure the crime scene could have done the looting. *Eh, sino pa?* Looting the dead seems to be the standard operating procedure (SOP) of cops at the scene of the crime.

* * *

Years ago, a young Constabulary lieutenant fresh from the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) divested a dead kidnapper of a very expensive Patek Philippe watch.

His former subordinates at the defunct Metrocom told me the lieutenant replaced the watch with his cheap Japanese wrist watch. If the expensive watch had not been replaced with a cheap one, the theft would have been obvious because the mark around the dead man's wrist would have shown.

The lieutenant later became a bigwig in the police force. Since that little-known theft, he has projected himself in the public consciousness as a very honest public official.

* * *

Did you know that Eduardo delos Reyes, the whistle-blower in the infamous Kuratong Baleleng rub-out case, may not have been moved by noble motives in exposing his comrades?

I was told he made the exposé because he didn't get his share of the loot. Delos Reyes was an investigator at the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) sent to the scene of the alleged shootout that resulted in the killing of 11 suspected bank robbers.

* * *

When Delos Reyes got to the scene, all that were left were two M-16 Armalite rifles "planted" on the dead men.

He heard that the rest of the items belonging to the dead suspects, including a bag containing US$2 million, had been taken by policemen who had captured the suspects earlier, or by cops who got to the scene ahead of Delos Santos.

Had it not been for the greed of his companions, the gangland-style rub-out would not have been exposed. Delos Santos would have kept quiet had he gotten his share of the loot.

* * *

Anyway, Delos Santos is now in Canada and doesn't want to testify in the long drawn-out case because, I was told, he was paid off handsomely to be silent.

The other witnesses—an alleged radio journalist and another on-the-scene investigator, were also paid off to keep their silence.

The radio journalist even had the temerity to ask for more bribe money after admitting some of the accused in the "Kuratong" case had bought him a passenger jeepney.

* * *

Why is it that when there's a bank robbery in progress and the incident has been reported to a nearby police station, all the policemen in the station volunteer to answer the alarm call? There's hardly any volunteer when an alarm to be answered has to do with a teenage gang rumble.

Why do more cops answer a much more dangerous bank robbery alarm than they do a fight between two teenage gangs? Because of the possibility that when cops catch up with the robbers, they'll kill all of them so they can get the stolen money.

* * *

If you're a foreigner in this country, be sure that you don't get into trouble with the locals.

You have to be as meek as a lamb when you deal with Filipinos. When a Filipino slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other cheek. Ask him to slap you or beat you up some more... and more, until he dies of exhaustion.

In short, when confronted by an aggressive local, be a masochist. A masochist is a person who loves to be hurt, physically or emotionally.

* * *

Especially, don't make the mistake of fighting a wealthy Filipino because he may have connections in government.

Even if the other guy started the fight, you have no right to fight back. After all, you're just a foreigner, a non-entity.

Filipinos complain of discrimination by Caucasians, discrimination in foreign countries where they work. But look at them, they also discriminate against foreigners.

* * *

Curtis Perry, an American investor at Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) who lives within the complex, got into a fight with a Filipino, Ed Prieto, inside the freeport complex recently.

Prieto, who was reportedly drunk at that time, dealt Perry the first blows. Because he was so soused, Prieto's punches did not hit their mark. Perry, of course, fought back in self-defense and inflicted a blackeye on his assailant. Two Federal Express cargo plane pilots saw the whole incident and became witnesses for Perry.

* * *

Two or three weeks after the incident, Perry received a summons from the Bureau of Immigration.

He's now being asked to present all records about his stay in the country and show proof that he's here on an investor's visa.

Perry is scared stiff. He said he hasn't done anything wrong against the Philippine government. It was just a barroom brawl with a fellow drunk. Why is he being summoned before immigration? What has complicated matters is that the two Fedex pilots are also being investigated by the immigration bureau.

If that's the way we treat foreigners, how do we expect more tourists and investors to come to our shores?

Palace guard killed in freak road accident

By Tina Santos

SPO1 PEDRO Vicedo of the Presidential Security Group was riding his government-issued motorcycle at high speed when he failed to see a 10-wheel cargo truck slowly maneuvering to park in Navotas on Thursday.

Vicedo rammed the rear of the truck and was killed instantly, police said.

Officer-on-case P03 Ferdinand Manapat said Vicedo, a member of the national police's Special Weapons and Tactics Team and assigned to the PSG based in Malacañang Palace, was cruising R10 road in Navotas on board a Yamaha 900cc motorcycle around 5 p.m. when he hit the rear of the Isuzu truck (ULW-620).

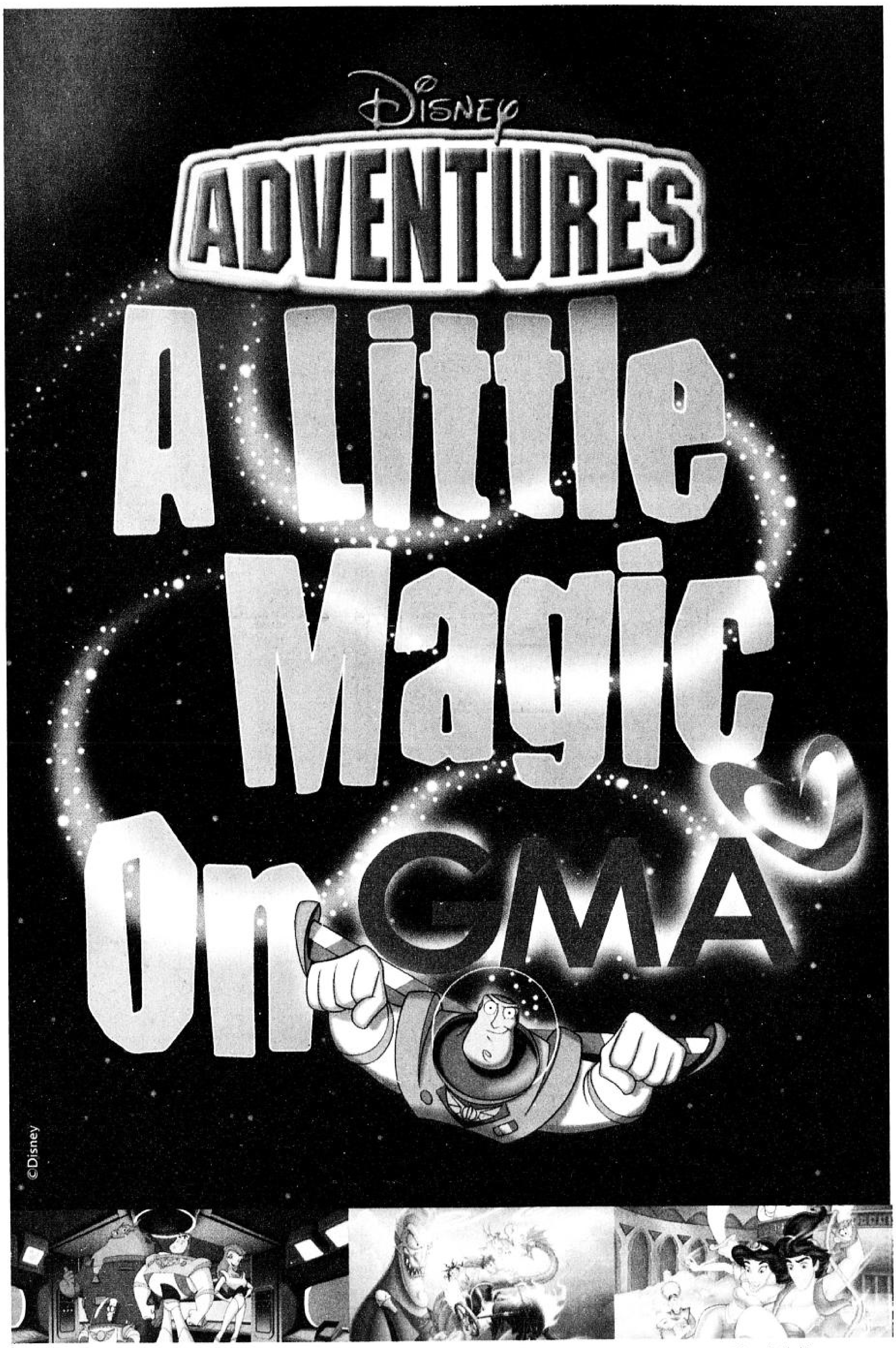
The truck driver, Ricardo Bulatao, 41, was slowly maneuvering to park in the compound of the Fish Wealth Canning Corporation when the accident happened, Manapat said.

Bulatao had already driven half of his truck into the compound when he suddenly heard a loud thud from the rear left side of his truck. Witnesses said Vicedo hit the truck's huge rear wheels, which crushed under him.

The skull of SPO1 Vicedo was cracked open on impact, police said.

SPO4 Victor Laya, also a SWAT member, took Vicedo to the hospital, but it was too late.

He was pronounced dead at the Tondo General Hospital, P03 Manapat said.



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Curfew measure sought for QC

By Alcuin Papa

THE QUEZON City government may soon implement a curfew for minors to bring down the crime rate in the city.

Councilor Bernadette Herrera of the city's second district told the INQUIRER that the measure calling for the implementation of a curfew for minors in the city is already in its second reading at the city council.

Herrera expressed confidence that the measure would pass this month, saying that the councilors were just debating on the time of the night in which the curfew would be implemented.

"It's about time," said Herrera, one of the authors of the ordinance. "(With the curfew), we can prevent petty and juvenile crimes and curb drug addiction among minors."

The Quezon City police and barangay officials will implement the curfew for those below 18 years old, between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.

First time offenders will be brought to the barangay hall, while their parents are summoned and lectured on the curfew.

On the second offense, the offender will be required to do eight hours of community work.

Herrera said the minors will only be required to do community work on weekends.

On the third offense, offenders will be required to do 16 hours of community work.

On the fourth and final offense, offenders will be taken to the Molave Youth Hall and placed under the custody of the city's social welfare office.

Two men appeal for help

DIGNA Yanos is appealing once more to kindhearted readers for help for her husband Robert, a 34-year-old farmer and kidney transplant patient.

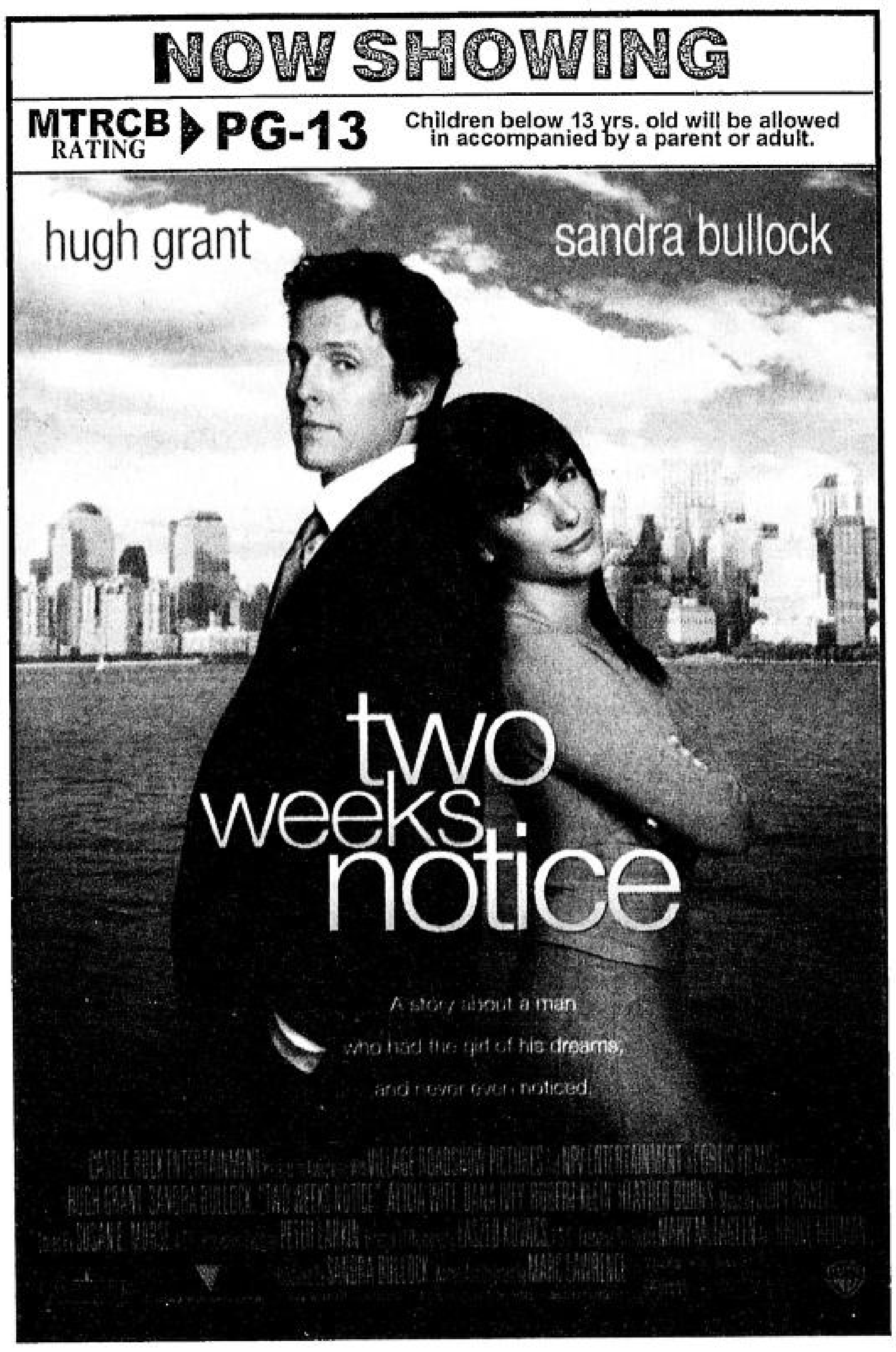
They have run out of funds to buy Robert's medicine, which he desperately needs to recover.

Those who wish to extend help to the Yanos family may call 455-4821 or call or text (0919) 441-0761.

The Yanos couple is trying their best to put up P76,657 a month for Robert's medicine so that he may recover to till the land once again and have the opportunity to see his children grow up. The couple are finding it hard to produce the money on their own and are seeking the readers' help.

Edgardo Olano, 28, is issuing the same appeal. He has already asked for help from many, asking for financial aid for his kidney transplant but, as of now, he still lacks funds.

Those who wish to extend assistance may forward it to Olano's residence at 18 Carmel Street, Tandang Sora, Quezon City. They may also call Olano's father Neofito at 722-9234, or text Olano at (0919) 589-0401.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Watch leads probers to murder suspect

By Leila Salaverria

A DEAD man's stolen wristwatch led to the identification of one of the suspects in the brutal killing and robbery of a promotions agency owner and the agency's caretaker.

Charges of robbery with homicide were filed yesterday against pedicab driver Rogelio Gelbolingo, 31, a resident of San Andres Bukid, Manila, and three unidentified suspects—two men and a woman. Cash worth P3 to 4million in different denominations, as well as over $1,000 worth of jewelry, were believed stolen from the agency after the killings.

Police are now on a manhunt for the suspects.

A neighbor of victim Vicente Banzuela has told police that he was talking with the promotions agency president on the day of the killing when he saw three men and a woman enter Banzuela's office. The neighbor promptly excused himself and left.

But of the four, only Gelbolingo has been identified. He was traced through the Tag Heuer wristwatch belonging to caretaker Carlito Alvarez, who was found stabbed to death inside the Jovic International Promotion Agency on Calatagan Street, Barangay Palanan along with his boss, Banzuela.

A pedicab driver told police that on Jan. 9, a few minutes after the killing was believed to have taken place, a man rode in his pedicab and asked to be driven to Manila.

The witness said he noticed that the man was pale, shaking and carried a white bloodstained towel. When the man got off, he paid P5 to the driver, who did not accept the money because the fare was P10. The man then got out a silver Tag Heuer watch and gave it to the driver. But before leaving, the man said he would be back for the watch.

When shown a picture of Gelbolingo, the witness was able to positively identify him as the one who paid him with the watch. Alvarez's daughter has identified the watch as the one belonging to her father.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Ali 3	I SPY
Ali 4	HERO
Ali 5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
Ali 6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
Ali 7	BELOW
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	BALAT SIBUYAS
Farmers 2	I SPY
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 8	LANI MISALUCHA CONCERT
FEB 13	RONAN KEATING CONCERT
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 8	10 AM / 3 PM / 5PM
FEB 9	3 PM / 5PM
FEB 11	10 AM / 3 PM

Man found dead in belfry batty, kin say

By Jerome Aning

THE MAN who hanged himself at the Our Lady of the Abandoned parish church in Sta. Ana was mentally ill and had been reported missing for several days, the Manila police said on Thursday.

Chief Insp. Juanito Taluban, Western Police District homicide section chief, said the body of Antonio Borja, 26, of Adora Street, Makati City, was identified and claimed late Wednesday by his brother.

Taluban told reporters that Borja was last seen alive on Saturday.

He said Borja's relatives told him that the victim had a metal illness which prompted his family to lock him up at home.

"They still don't know how he managed to escape from the house," Taluban said.

He added that the relatives quickly identified Borja because of television reports describing his size and the clothes he was wearing.

But investigator SPO2 Steve Casimiro is not yet closing the case.

The policeman said that he wants to know how the victim got into the church, since only church personnel are allowed inside on ordinary days and Saturdays.

It is possible that some of the choir members knew the victim well enough to allow him inside the church, SPO1 Casimiro said.

The assistant curate, Tony Lazaro, discovered Borja's decomposing remains suspended in the church's belfry around 10 a.m. on Wednesday.

The body was already decomposing and had been nibbled by rats.

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OPENS FEBRUARY 12
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18
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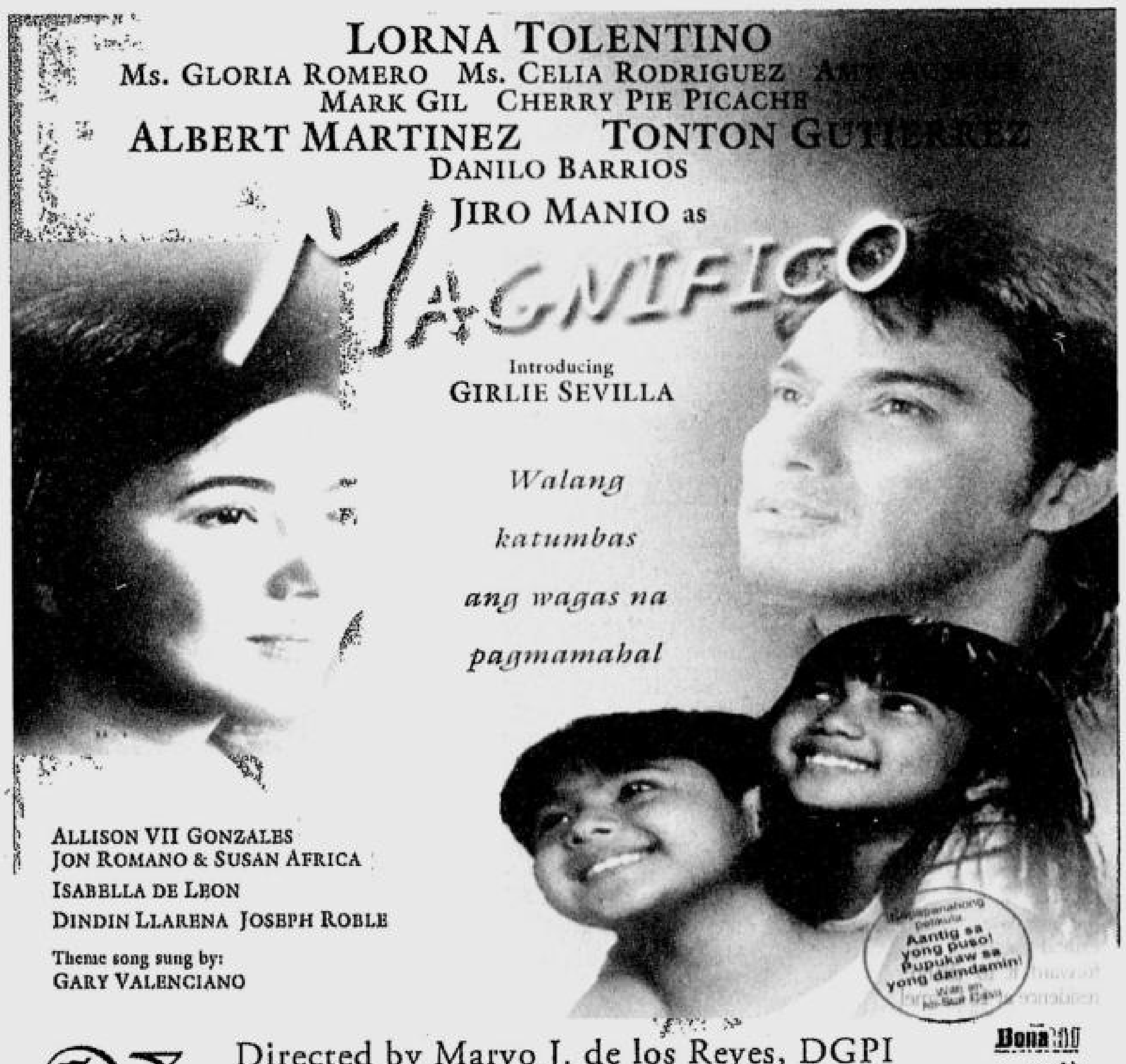
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Violett
Directed by Maryo J. de los Reyes, DGPI
A Violett Films Production
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Militants' boat rally blocked

By Christian Esguerra

AROUND 1,000 fishermen staged a "boat rally" at the Pasig River on Wednesday to protest the resumption of the P2.9-billion flood-control project in southern Metro Manila and nearby Laguna province.

On board 300 boats, members of Mapagpala, an alliance of fisherfolk and farmers organizations, converged at the mouth of the river before dawn and sailed toward Malacañang to seek an audience with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The boats surrounded a massive tower made of bamboo, symbolizing lakeshore communities' unity against the road dike project.

But protesters did not reach their destination when members of the Coast Guard blocked their path on at least two occasions, said Jane Austria, coordinator of the Community Organizers Multiversity.

Despite piercing through the first blockade at Guadalupe in Makati, the boats were eventually stopped by two huge barges near the Nagtahan bridge in Manila, Austria said.

Protesters want the government to suspend the construction of a 9.8-kilometer road dike.

Residents fear the project would only worsen flooding in their areas and destroy huge tracts of residential and agricultural land.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BAKAT / BRAZEN WOMAN
ODEON	BALAT SIBUYAS
ODEON-2	MASARAP ANG UNANG KAGAT / NAIIBANG HAYOP
ROBEN	BALAT SIBUYAS
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY KIDS 2 / MASTER DISGUISE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SUKDULAN
CORONET B	TUXEDO / TEENAGE SEDUCTION
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	BALAT SIBUYAS
REMAR-2	SUKDULAN
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SUKDULAN
B	BALAT SIBUYAS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	I SPY
CINEMA-2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BALAT SIBUYAS
CINEMA-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
CINEMA-3	THE RING
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	FEMME FATALE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-6	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-7	8 MILE
CINEMA-8	HOT CHICK
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HERO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	I SPY
CINEMA-12	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-14	BELOW
CINEMA-15	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LNES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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HERO P13 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00	HOT CHICK P13 12:45,2:55,5:05, 7:15,9:30	TWO WEEKS NOTICE P13 11:15, 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

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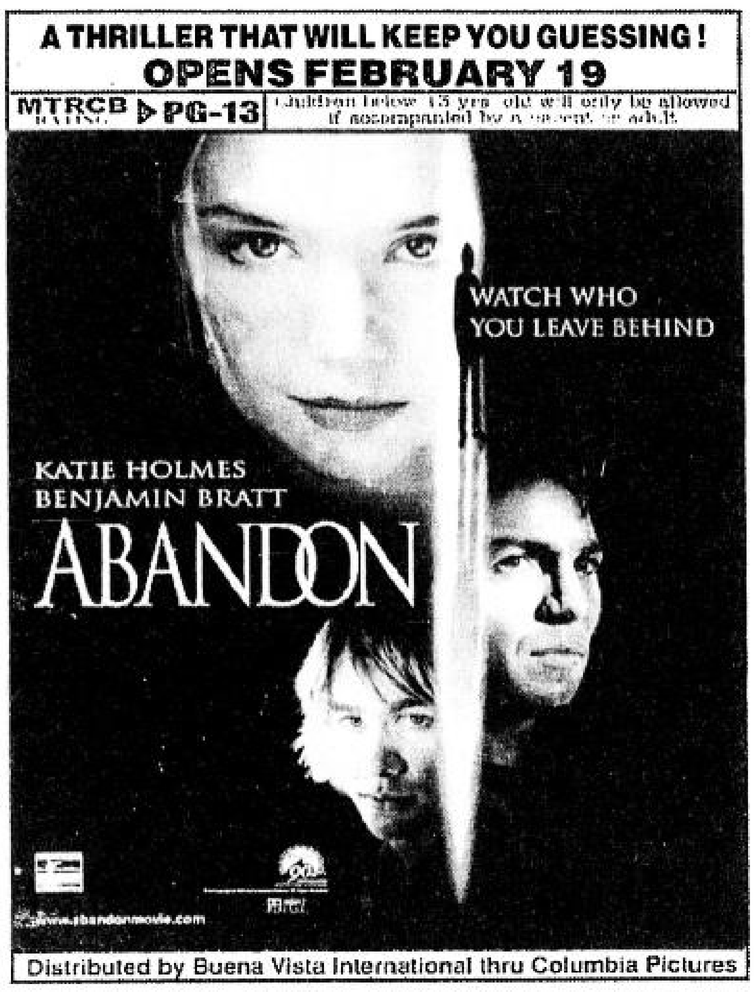
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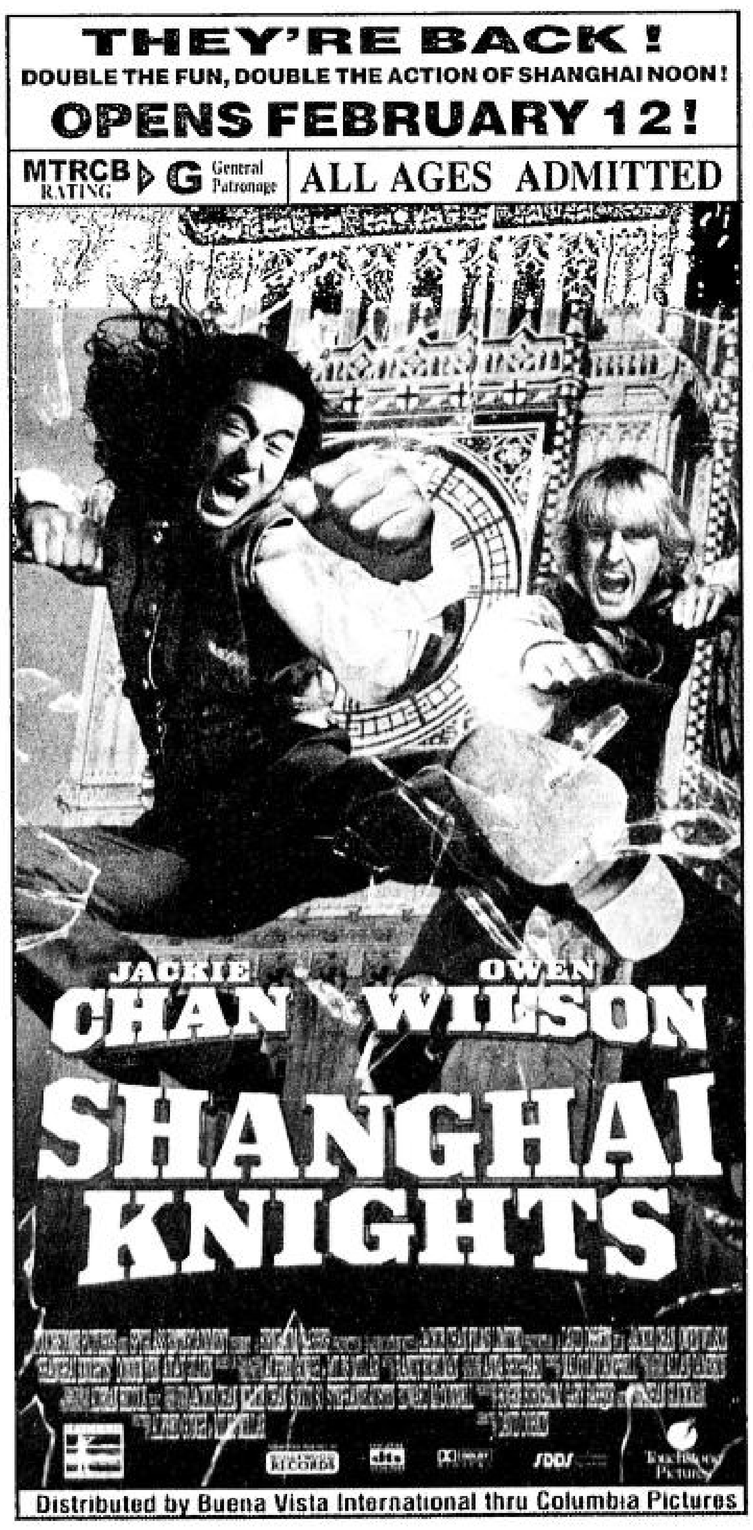
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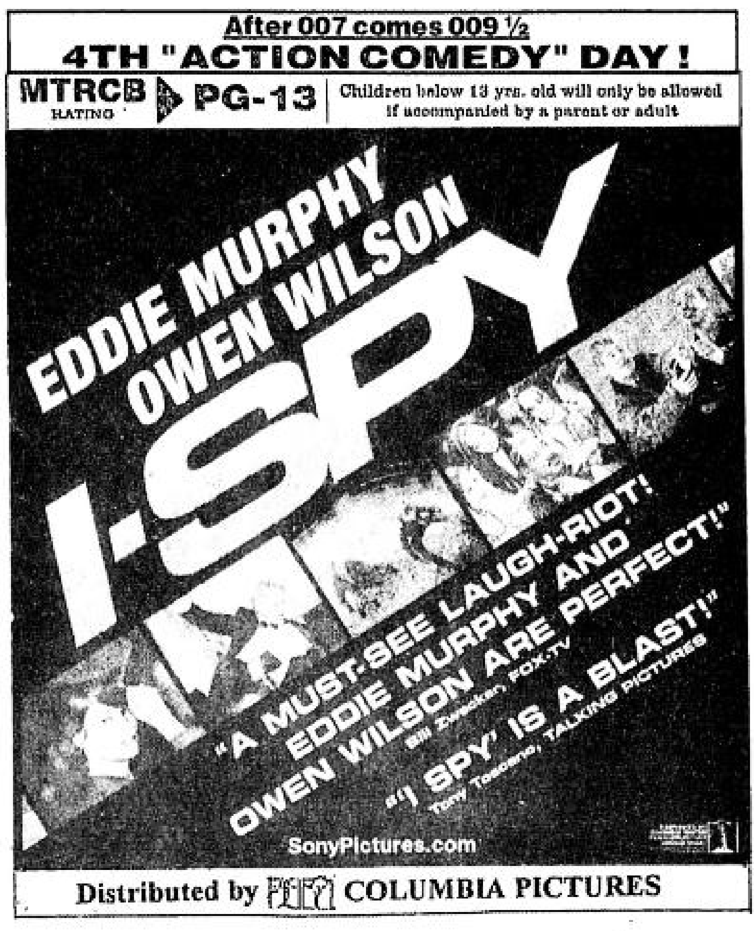
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katya santos
Sukdulan
hanggang saan ka sasabay?
hanggang kailan ka bibigay?
DIRECTED BY MAC C. ALEJANDRE
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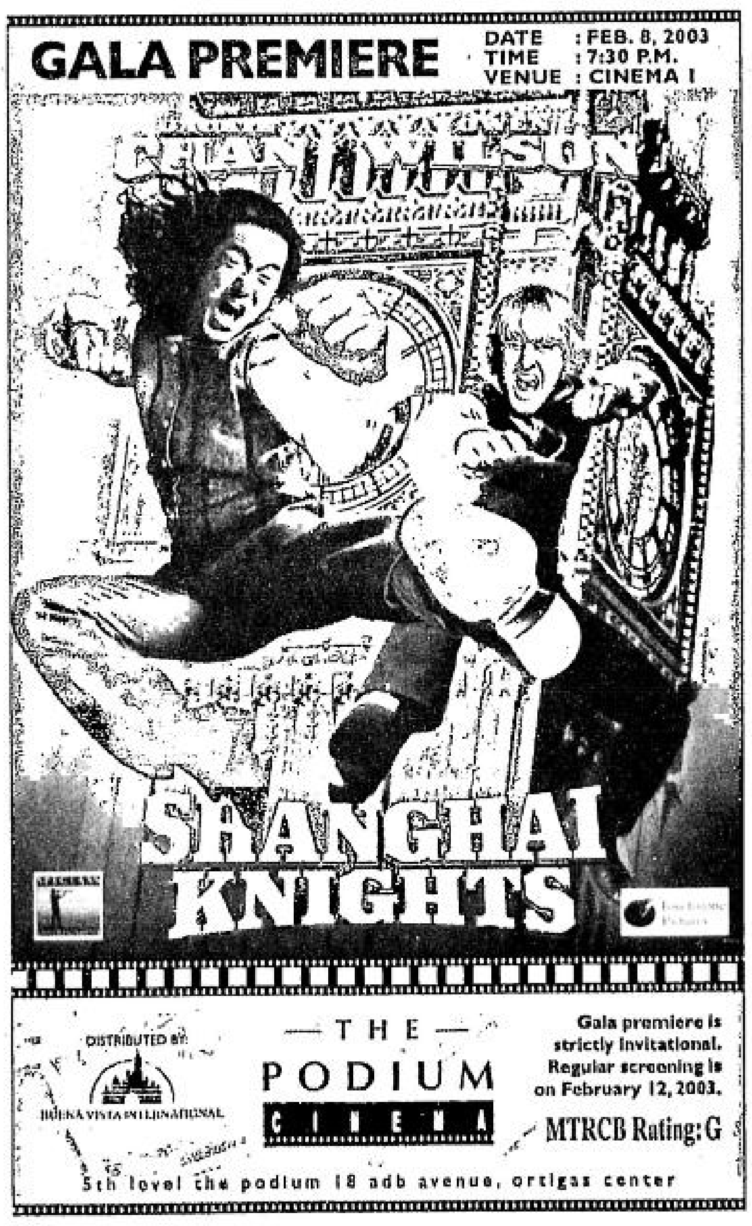
GALA PREMIERE
DATE : FEB. 8, 2003
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Here's a sad tale of a few bouncing checks

By Jerry Esplanada

The Velayos, aghast over estafa charges, hit back with two suits

"OUT OF compassion," a Muntinlupa City businesswoman came to the rescue of an allegedly financially-troubled couple whom she considered her close friends with a personal loan amounting to nearly P2.58 million.

But Bernadette Ching-Pamute got what she called the "biggest shock of my life" when she later tried to get her money back. Instead of settling their debt, Mark Alexander Velayo and wife Ma. Carolina (nicknamed "Chona") cited her in not just one but two lawsuits.

Mrs. Velayo was quick to deny Pamute's claims, saying she "might owe other people money but not to her."

In a phone interview, she accused Pamute of "weaving and twisting stories."

The Velayo's, in a joint affidavit, had earlier claimed Pamute was trying to collect an "imaginary debt" from them.

They said it was them who "oriented and tried to teach (Pamute) the ins and outs of the jewelry business and how to appraise precious stones, especially diamonds...We even supplied her with jewelry pieces from our collection for her to sell."

The accuser stood her ground.

"They had the temerity to sue me for libel in Pasig and Mandaluyong, obviously an attempt to escape responsibility for their financial obligation. They also demanded P1 million each in damages. That's what I get for helping friends in need," Pamute, an insurance broker for Lloyd's of London, told the INQUIRER.

Mark Alexander, a gemologist and a son of famous jeweler Ding Velayo, and Chona own the K. Velayo Pawnshop and Jewelry shop at the Shangri-la Plaza Mall on Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City.

Pamute said she had no recourse but to file criminal cases against the couple, citing them for estafa and violation of Batas Pambansa 22, otherwise known as the "bouncing checks" law.

According to Pamute, her trouble started on July 30, 2002 when the Velayos came to see her at her Makati City office. "They made us believe there was a threat on their lives by their jewelry supplier. They also promised to pay their loan once their bank released the proceeds of the mortgage of their house in Merville," she recalled.

Because the loan was still not enough to cover the couple's alleged indebtedness, Pamute introduced the Velayos to one of her friends, businessman Johnny Tan who, she claimed, extended them a credit of P3 million last Aug. 9.

"Chona Velayo issued a post-dated check in the amount of P3 million inclusive of a 3-percent interest per month. They had agreed that the term of the loan would only be 15 days. The check was later dishonored by the Binondo branch of Chinabank due to insufficient funds," Pamute said.

The Velayos, however, claimed in an affidavit that Pamute shared the loan with them.

Pamute vehemently denied this. In a sworn statement, Pamute said Ms Velayo executed a promissory note in her handwriting last Aug. 30, acknowledging her debt to the Pamutes—$37,325 (about P1.97 million) and an additional P600,000. "A post-dated check in the amount of P750,000 was likewise issued to us, supposedly as partial payment to their loan," she noted.

Last Sept. 3, the check was dishonored by the bank, again because it was drawn against insufficient funds.

"I immediately informed (the Velayos) about it and demanded that they make good the check or replace it with cash. Despite my verbal demand, they still made no action to my great prejudice," she said.

"Worse, during the times I talked to them, they made it clear they were not going to honor their obligation. One time, Mark Velayo, with complete audacity and arrogance, even told me it would be cheaper for them to hire a lawyer than pay their obligation to us," she lamented.

Sometime in mid-October, Pamute sought the help of the Guild of Philippine Jewellers in getting her money back from the Velayos whose firm is a member of the group.

GPJ president Mercedes Llamas wrote Pamute a letter to state it was the guild's policy that "any complaint already addressed in the legal system shall not be interfered with by the guild until such time that finality in the court ruling has been made."

But Llamas also assured her that "some members of the board shall try to help you in their personal capacity."

Still, nothing happened, Pamute claimed, prompting her to seek assistance from Velayos' son, Robert Clark. On Oct. 14, she faxed a note to his Hongkong and Shanghai Bank office to "beg your help to talk to your parents to pay us what is legally and morally due us...We are in this fix of owing people money because of your parents."

The Velayos responded with the libel cases, claiming Pamute's letter-appeal to the guild "destroyed forever the good reputation and name of the Velayos" and that the faxed message "caused Robert Clark grave embarrassment and severe anxieties."

"The letter pictured us as dishonest people who do not know how to acknowledge their debts, let alone how to pay them in time," they said.

"What about the P750,000 partial payment they made to us and Chona's handwritten note acknowledging the balance of their debt?" Pamute asked.

She dismissed the Velayos' claims as "pure and simple malicious and fabricated distortions of the truth which have been cleverly concocted to cloud the actual facts of the (libel) cases."

Naia for sale

From page A21

priate measures to take in light of the auction.

According to Mayor Marquez, the Manila International Airport Authority has until February next year to redeem the airport runway to deny the local government full ownership of the property.

Should the MIAA fail to settle its multimillion-peso tax obligation, the mayor said airport authorities would be forced to rent use of the runway from the city government.

Even if that happens, Marquez assured the public that the airport's operations would not be stalled.

"We just want this auction to serve as an example to all tax delinquents, especially government owned and controlled corporations," he told the INQUIRER during the public auction at the Parañaque session hall.

Impatient

Manda slammed Marquez for being "too impatient" and conducting a public bidding of airport property even with a case pending in the Supreme Court.

He also compared the mayor with his Pasay City counterpart, Wenceslao Trinidad.

"Why can't (Marquez) wait for the court case to be resolved, like Mayor Trinidad?" Manda asked. "The MIAA wasn't even served notice of the auction today. He's too impatient."

He said legal remedies could still be explored at this point, even after the Parañaque City government supposedly acquired the Naia property since the whole exercise was done "sub judice."

The property in question comprises at least 334 square meters of lot, where the airport runway is located at Barangay Vitalez.

Parañaque and MIAA decided to try to amicably settle the tax dispute after the Court of Appeals junked the MIAA's petition to stop Parañaque from auctioning off the airport.

Marquez claimed Manda went to the negotiating table only to buy more time and wait for the Supreme Court to rule on the case.

"I'm sick and tired of their dilatory tactics," Marquez said.

Parañaque to check...

From page A21

planes as they approach the landing strip.

Zialcita said Multinational residents would have to wait for at least two years before the squatters could be relocated. He said the local government was still negotiating the sale of the Global City property.

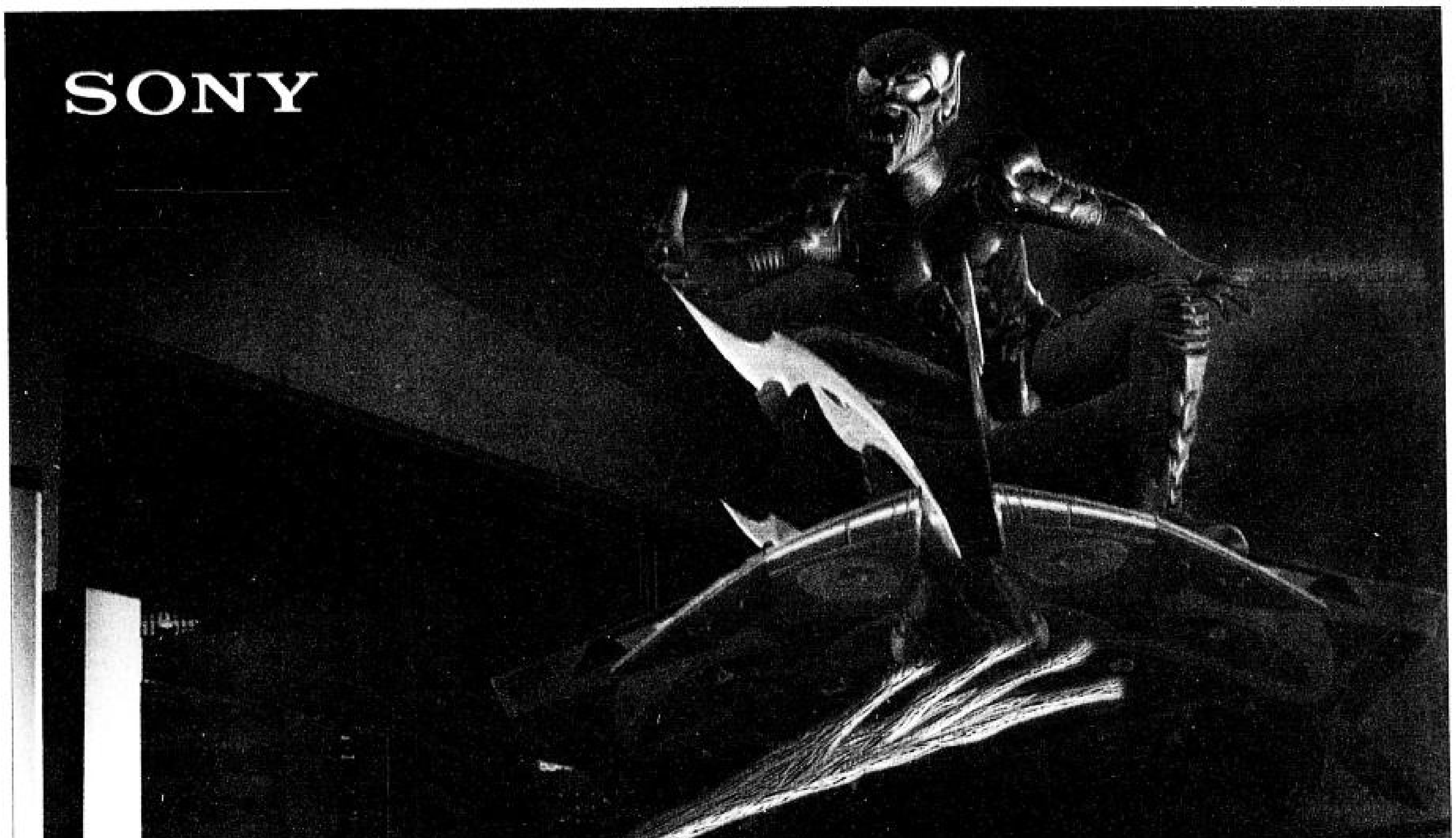
In the meantime, the lawmaker urged the Manila International Airport Authority to implement immediate security measures to prevent a possible terrorist attack on the country's premier airport.

"The problem really is that the airport doesn't seem to know what it wants to do," he said.

MIAA general manager Edgardo Manda had announced the establishment of a buffer zone to keep squatters, tricycle drivers, and ambulant vendors from the airport's perimeter.

Despite the move, villagers said airport officials were still treating the problem with kid gloves, especially because it took them nearly a year to put up the buffer zone.

The residents said only the relocation of squatters would substantially reduce the threat of terrorists shooting down planes in the area.



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METRO

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

No way out of traffic

By Leila B. Salaverria

IF you get stuck in traffic, just grin and bear, at least until February 21.

Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday said he has no plans of lifting the three-week suspension of the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) before the deadline of the trial period is up.

"Let them wait for February 21," Fernando said yesterday, referring to those who complain and call for the re-implementation of the scheme. "Besides, there are also those who say the lifting of the scheme was a good idea."

The UVVRP was lifted on February 3 in the whole of Metro Manila except Makati.

Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel De Dios said the lifting is an experiment and the MMDA would need to study the situation while the UVVRP is suspended so that it would know if the scheme needs to be abolished, re-implemented or modified.

He added that in the MMDA's previous traffic experiments, the first week has usually been hellish, but things stabilized soon after. He also expressed puzzlement at the criticism thrown the MMDA's way.

"Why is it that (we're being criticized) as if the idea to suspend the UVVRP came only from us?" De Dios said.

Earlier, Fernando said the suspension of the UVVRP was a result of public clamor, although it took a long time to suspend it because the MMDA had to conduct some studies first.

Fernando also refused to comment on Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto's criticism that the MMDA Chair was ignoring the heavy traffic in Metro Manila because of his ego.

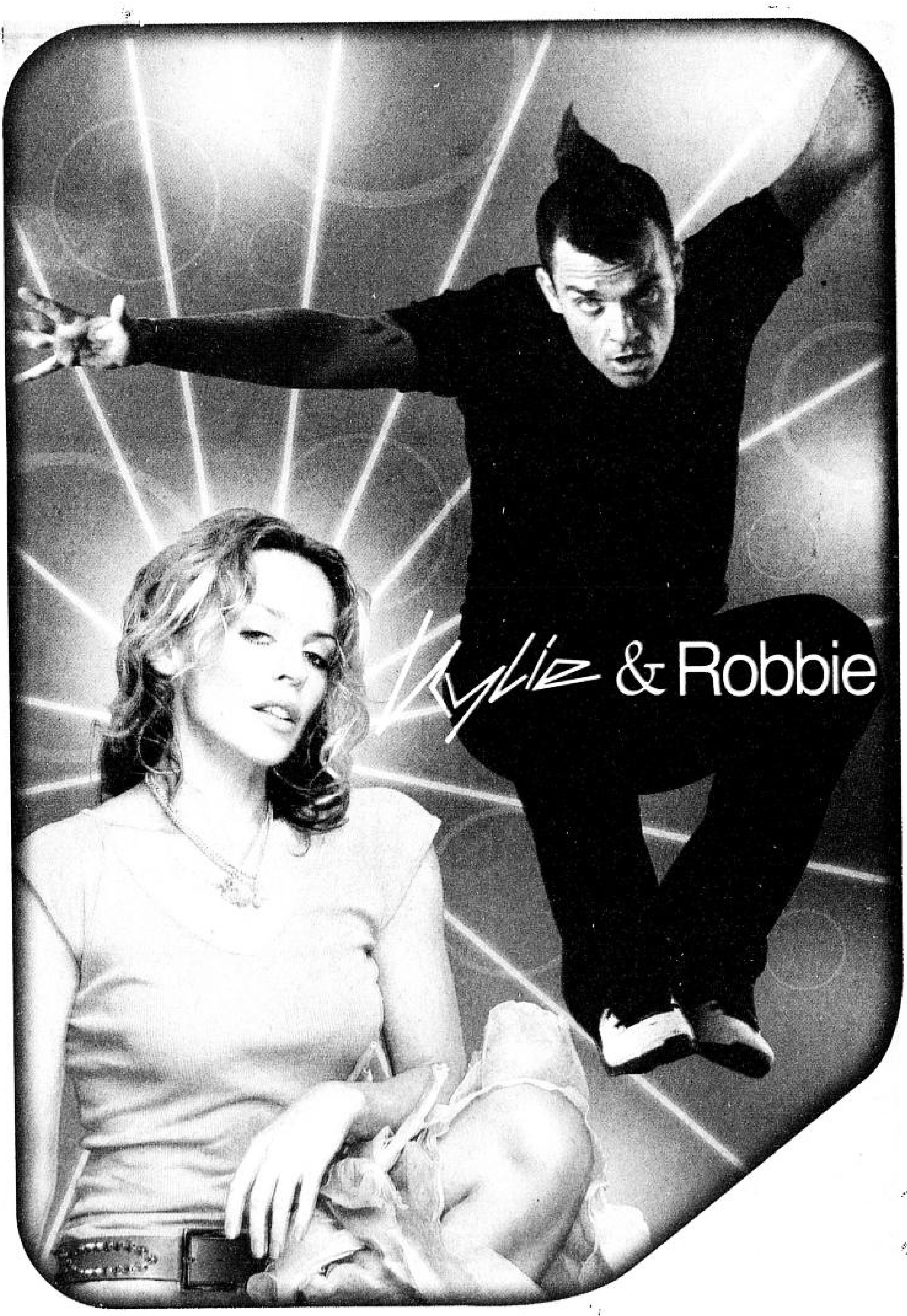
"Pasensya na lang kamo siya (Just extend to him my regrets)," he told the Inquirer.

The MMDA Chair also said yesterday that he has just been floating around the odd-even scheme for buses and has no plans of implementing it any time soon.

Still, he defended the idea, saying it would actually bring about a slew of benefits for bus operators.

"Instead of the buses going out everyday but being only half full, they could go out every other day and be filled to capacity," he said.

MANILA cops work deep into the cold night to make random check on possible gun-ban violators. RANDY HORMILLOSA



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Kylie & Robbie

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- Love At First Sight keyword: *firstsight*
- In Your Eyes keyword: *inureyes*
- Come Into My World keyword: *in2myworld*
- Can't Get You Out Of My Head keyword: *outfmyhead*
- Feel keyword: *feel*
- She's The One keyword: *shesdone*
- Better Man keyword: *betterman*
- Rock DJ keyword: *rockdj*

PICTURE MESSAGES

KYLIEP1
KYLIELOGOP
ROBBIEP2
ROBBIEP3
ROBBIEP4

Key in PIC <keyword> and send to 209.

LOGOS

KYLIEL
KYLIEL1
KYLIEL3
KYLIEL4
ROBBIEL1
ROBBIEL2
ROBBIEL4

Key in LOGO <keyword> and send to 209.

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Church tips on how to combat traffic burnout

By Armand N. Nocum

DON'T give up. There's still a chance of keeping your cool to survive the mounting traffic mess. Try God.

Bring rosaries, not guns. Pray, don't engage in shouting matches.

This, in a nutshell, was a CBCP official's advice to trigger-happy motorists whose tempers are again put to the test by the traffic gridlock caused by the suspended "color-coding" scheme.

With guns now a no-no to drivers due to rising incidents of shooting emanating from traffic altercations, an official of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines said people should now make it a "habit" to make the rosary a travel companion.

"It is okay to place a rosary inside a car. This is for a safe trip," said CBCP Secretary General Monsignor Hernando Coronel.

He added: "With the suspension of the color-coding, we urge drivers to be more cautious. They should pray before driving.

Metro Manilans appear to have company in their misery.

Coronel also furnished reporters a news feed showing that even the Vatican has launched a plan that stresses the importance of pastoral care for highway workers and travellers, reminding them of their responsibility to themselves and other people.

A Feb. 4 report of the Zenit News Services, a Vatican-based news organization showed that the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers' apostolate consists in appealing on drivers to exercise greater responsibility when driving.

"The qualities proper to a driver are courtesy, correction and prudence to be able to surmount eventual unexpected incidents, caused by other highway users (because of exhaustion, alcohol abuse, medicines, lack of knowledge of traffic rules etc.), as well as atmospheric conditions, the state of the car, or the highway network," the Vatican body said.

But even policemen cannot keep their cool

By Nelson F. Flores

EVEN cops, tasked to maintain order, could not stand traffic disorder.

A policeman has been detained after he indiscriminately fired his gun late Thursday night in San Juan following a minor traffic incident.

Apprehended was PO3 Mohamad Sugod Jr., a member of the Central Police District Office special project unit. He was with a fellow police officer, PO2 Ibrahim Panangonon, also a member of the CPDO-SPU, when arrested.

SPO4 Nicanor Ginese, San Juan municipal police station desk officer, said the two policemen were riding a motorcycle when they bumped a taxi driven by Fortunato Rosales at the N. Domingo and Pinaglabanan intersection. Rosales was making a left turn from N. Domingo Street when the accident happened.

Ginese said that when Rosales stepped out of his cab to help the two policemen, Sugod pulled out his gun and fired, prompting the taxi driver to beg for his life.

The burst of gunfire caused a number of bystanders to converge at the accident site as they urged Sugod not to shoot Rosales.

San Juan police operatives arrived at the scene and arrested Sugod. Since Sugod's gun is properly covered by documents, only grave threat charges are being readied against him.

However, Sugod has been detained at the San Juan municipal police station jail.

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BUSINESS

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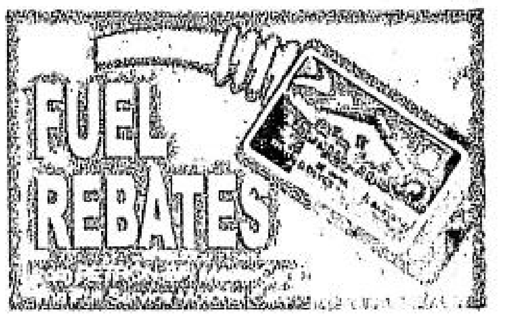
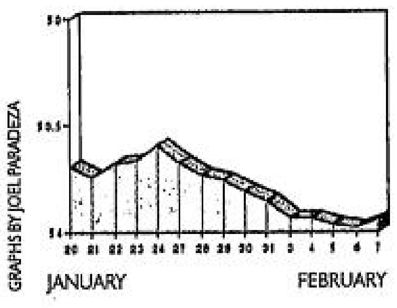


Gov't moves to strengthen peso

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P53.94 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 7, 2003

¥120.16 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 7, 2003

GOLD: $371.00-372.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb.7, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end up slightly

SHARES closed marginally higher yesterday on technical buying after three days of decline but turnover remained light, a sign of the generally cautious mood in the market due to a possible US-led attack on Iraq.

Companies expected to have posted healthy profits in 2002 led the market's rise, such as Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., up P2.50 to P285.

Globe Telecom, which posted a 59-percent annual surge in 2002 profit, climbed 4.76 percent to P550.

"Given several days of consolidation in the market, bargain hunters took advantage of the attractive prices of companies which performed well last year," said Astro del Castillo, analyst at A&A Securities Inc.

The Philippine stock index gained 5.27 points or 0.51 percent to 1,041.83 points. It slid 1.4 percent for the week but was up 2.3 percent so far this year.

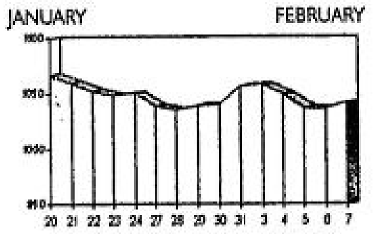
Turnover fell to P195.5 million from Thursday's P327.1 million. Gainers outpaced losers, 22 to 17, while 35 issues were unchanged.

"The light value turnover indicates that the market remains cautious, affected by war jitters," Del Castillo said.

US President George W. Bush said on Thursday he would support a new UN resolution authorizing war on Iraq, saying the "game is over" for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and challenging the UN Security Council to stand up to Iraqi defiance.

Power distributor Manila Electric Co.'s A-shares lost 1.15 percent to P8.60 and its "B" shares fell 4 percent to P12 on reports that one of the firm's stockholders, Spanish utility firm Union Fenosa SA, was rethinking its investments in the firm due to its dire financial condition. *Reuters*

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Forex reserves hit $16.4B in end-January

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday announced that it would go back to the market in the next two weeks to sell P5 billion worth of three-year, dollar-linked bonds.

At the same time, the Department of Finance also announced officially that it would sell 500 million worth of euro-denominated bonds very soon. The float will be handled by Credit Suisse First Boston Ltd., Deutsche Bank AG and JP Morgan Europe Ltd.

The twin measures are aimed at stabilizing the peso, which is being pummeled in the foreign exchange market due to speculation fueled by fears of war in Iraq.

"It is anticipated that the bonds will have a maturity of seven years. This is the Republic's second entry into the international bond markets in 2003 following the reopening of the 2013 bonds earlier this year. The size and timing of the issue will be determined in due course," said the DOF in a statement.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza, however, said the government has yet to secure the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Monetary Board for the new round of dollar-linked bonds.

Dollar linked bonds give investors a chance to protect the value of their peso investments.

"This is a good time to issue dollar-linked bonds again so we could help address the peso's volatility and at the same time raise funds for the government," Edeza said.

Also expected to help stabilize the peso is the healthy level of the country's foreign exchange reserves.

More than $1 billion in proceeds from borrowings of the national government buoyed the reserves to $16.416 billion as of end-January, up $237 million or 1.46 percent from the previous month.

The Bangko Sentral said inflows from debt and investments were offset by payments for maturing obligations.

"The increase was due to foreign exchange deposits by the national government of its loan proceeds as well as investment income," said BSP director for economic research Cyd Amador.

The central bank is targeting to keep the country's dollar reserves at between $14 billion and $15 billion.

The government deposited in the BSP vaults the proceeds of its $500-million, 10-year global bond issue as well as the $200 million from the sale of zero coupon bonds. The National Power Corp. also parked the $500 million in proceeds from an 18-year yen bond issue in December.

The current level of foreign exchange reserves can pay for more than five months worth of imports of goods and services. It can also cover 265 percent of the country's short-term debt.

The healthy level of gross reserves ensures that the peso will remain stable. The central bank, traders said, was armed with enough bullets to quash peso speculators.

Exporters complain of rising hijacking cases

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

EXPORT-ORIENTED firms from Calabarzon have expressed alarm over the rise in hijacking of millions of pesos worth of goods in key transport lanes in Batangas, Laguna, Cavite and Manila.

Companies that have fallen victims to the highway robbers over the last 12 months included Fujitsu Ten Corp. of the Philippines, Toshiba Information Technology, Rohm Megatech Philippines, Mitsumi Philippines Inc., Dunlop Slazenger Philippines, Hitachi Cable, Shin Heung Electro Digital Corp., Chrismina Garments, ITT Industries Gould Pumps, Winnie's Garments, and International Electric Wire Philippines Inc.

The Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Philippines (JCCI) identified four highway robbery cases since 2000 involving its members that it did not identify. The value of merchandise involved was estimated at $2 million.

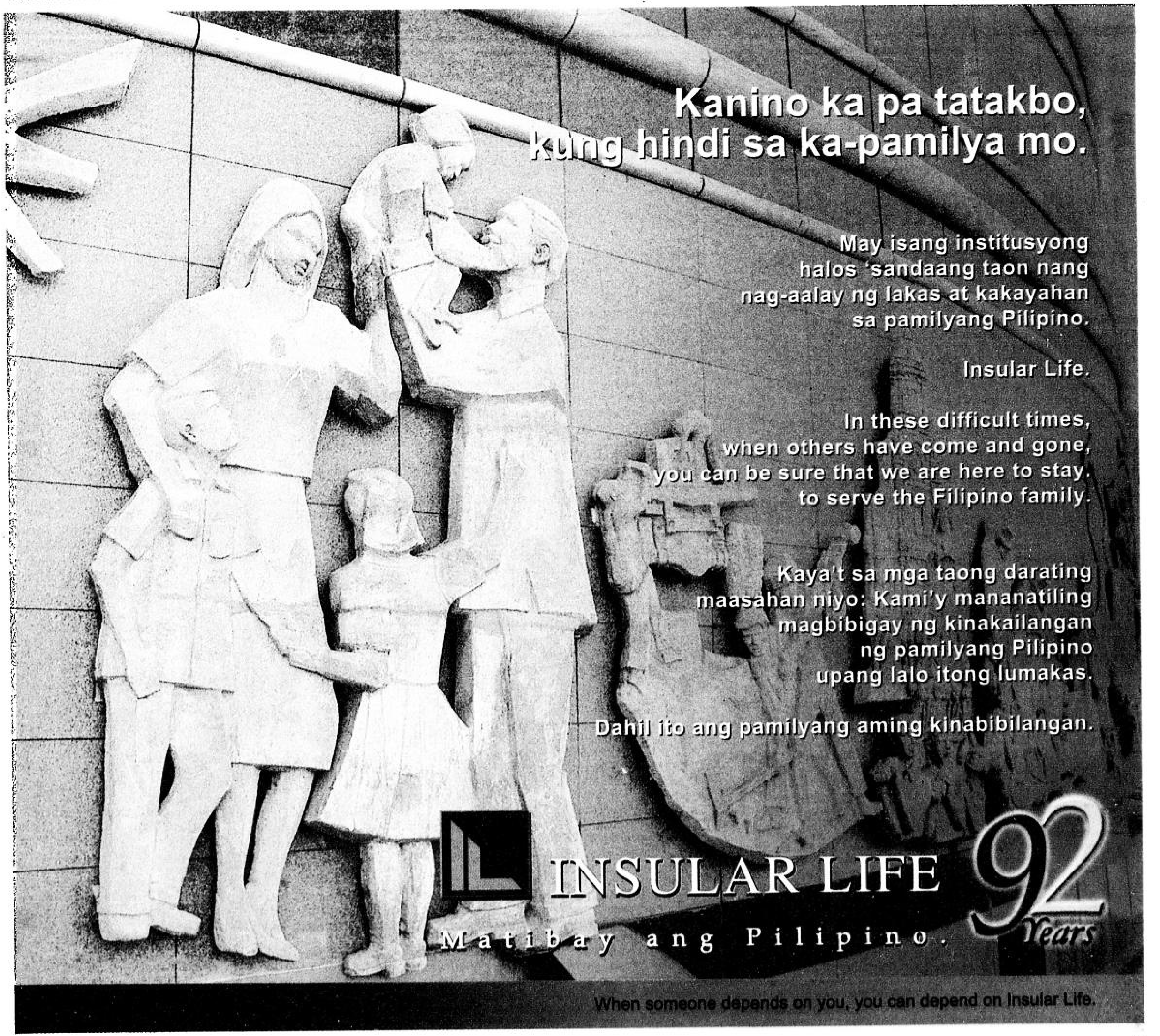
The exporters have identified several key routes that have been prone to hijacking and highway robberies: the stretch from Lipa to Sto. Tomas and Tanauan/Sto. Tomas boundary to Sto. Tomas junction in Batangas; the stretch from Tulo to Turbina in Calamba in Laguna; between Carmona and Pala-Pala, Dasmariñas in Cavite and greater Manila area; and the area around Anda Circle-Del Pan Bridge in Manila.

Representatives of the JCCI European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Semiconductor and Electronics Industry of the Philippines Inc., and the Philippine International Seafreight Forwarders Association Inc. met with government and police officials a few days ago to urge the government to look into the lawlessness in the country's highways.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II admitted that the incidence of hijacking, highway robberies and pilferage had become a serious business problem that has to be addressed soon.

Roxas reported that Philippine National Police deputy chief for operations Gen. Edgardo Aglipay has committed to focus on solving the problem within the next 2 months.

He said the country could not afford to let the rampant hijacking of container vans continue because it could further dampen investor interest in the country.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kung hindi sa ka-pamilya mo.
May isang institusyong
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nag-aalay ng lakas at kakayahan
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ng pamilyang Pilipino
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Dahil ito ang pamilyang aming kinabibilangan.
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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang ◎ Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

New heart bypass procedure less invasive

By Charles E. Buban

A LONG and painful incision in the leg used to be a necessary evil for heart patients who needed to undergo a coronary artery bypass.

The long incision had to be made so doctors could harvest a saphenous vein in the leg; the vein is used as a bypass conduit to replace a blocked artery in the heart. In a triple bypass, the incision could even be from the groin to the ankle!

Complications, including swelling and infection, usually result from this traditional saphenous vein harvesting procedure.

But heart patients need not go through this painful process anymore. There is a new surgical technique where doctors need only cut a small incision in the leg to harvest the needed vein. And the procedure is now being done in the Philippines.

Vaso view

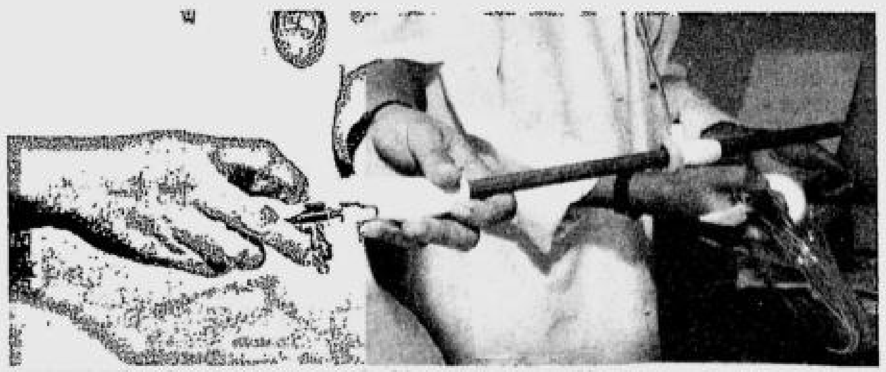
Dr. Jorge Garcia, chief of cardiac surgery at Asian Hospital and Medical Center, said that through the use of a Vaso view instrument, doctors only have to make one incision in the leg, no longer than two centimeters, to get the vein for the bypass.

"Our patients like it. It procedure eliminates most of the complications," said Garcia, who has already performed the procedure on 60 patients.

The patients' recuperation period is also cut down, he noted.

FROMTHIS small incision in the leg, Dr. Merv Orocio (left) and renowned heart surgeon Dr. Jorge Garcia were able to harvest the vein needed by the patient for a heart bypass. CHITO VECINA

The Vaso view instrument comprises of a long rod with a conical tip and micro camera, which are inserted into the small incision in the leg. The camera transmits images to a video monitor which the surgeon looks at while maneuvering the instrument inside the leg. The required vein is isolated, cut, and pulled out through the same incision.



COMPACT and easy to operate, the Vaso view surgical instrument is used to harvest the saphenous vein in the leg for a heart bypass. CHITO VECINA

Two AHMC surgeons have undergone training at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. on the technique so more doctors could offer it in the Philippines.

Other firsts

The AHMC is offering several other new heart procedures so their patients no longer have to go abroad for their treatment.

"Our main thrust in making these sophisticated procedures and devices readily available to our patients is to bring quality healthcare closer to Filipinos," said Garcia.

"It also saves them considerable amount of money since they no longer have to go abroad. And being closer to their families and loved ones makes the patient comfortable and recover faster."

One procedure AHMC is now offering is the off-pump coronary artery bypass, otherwise known as the beating heart surgery.

This is an alternative to the coronary bypass operation where a pump serves as an artificial heart while doctors graft a blood vessel around the blockage. There is a great deal of risk and trauma associated with this procedure because the patient's heart does not beat for several hours.

In an off-pump coronary artery bypass, surgeons operate on the heart while it beats.

"With this technique, complications such as stroke, kidney failure, respiratory insufficiency and bleeding is much less, and blood transfusion requirement is also reduced. More importantly, patients recover much faster," Garcia said.

Microwave energy

Another heart procedure offered by the AHMC is the Maze which uses microwave energy and radio frequency to burn the pathway of abnormal impulses in patients with atrial fibrillation.

There is also the left ventricular remodeling which resizes and reshapes the damaged heart back to its original size and shape, helping it to function better.

The hospital also offers the Left Ventricular Assist Device, which functions like an artificial heart outside the patient's body, keeping him alive for four to six weeks, enough time for him to prepare for a heart transplant.

Heart, vascular diseases wreak havoc on unsuspecting population

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

By Tessa R. Salazar

CARDIOVASCULAR diseases cause the most number of deaths all over the world. They have also been the leading causes of deaths in the Philippines since 1991.

The rate of cardiovascular diseases in the country in the 1970s—69.8 per 100,000 people—shot up to 128.6 per 100,000 in the 1990s. It now accounts for 25 percent of all deaths in the country, according to figures from the Department of Health and the Philippine Heart Center.

The rise in mortality from cardiovascular diseases is primarily due to the increase in cases of hypertension (high blood), coronary artery disease and stroke ("brain attack").

Dr. Dante D. Morales, president of the Philippine Lipid Society, said a 1998 survey of the Philippine Heart Association showed that among those who suffered from hypertension, only 37 percent took medications. Of those who took medications, only 44 percent complied with their prescriptions; and of those who were compliant, only 43 percent consciously took efforts to control their blood pressure.

"One of the problems in the treatment of hypertension is the cost of medicines," noted Dr. Gregorio B. Patacsil Jr., president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension.

"Even if patients are instructed to take their medicines once a day, they either stop taking their medicines altogether or they take them every other day or only when they already feel something bad," he said.

Hardening of arteries

Like diabetes, dyslipidemia, smoking, obesity and lack of exercise, hypertension can cause atherosclerosis, a condition where the arteries harden.

Once arteries get blocked, blood supply is halted in the affected area.

Morales said blockage and rupture of the arteries can take place even at an early stage. He said one study showed that 80 percent of people who developed heart attacks had plaques or fatty buildups that blocked less than 50 percent of the artery—which is considered by experts as an early stage.

Patacsil stressed that atherosclerosis, if not detected early, is irreversible.

"It can lead to heart attacks and heart failure, strokes or kidney disease. Patients with kidney disease usually end up on dialysis," he said.

"People just don't realize that blood pressure can easily be controlled. The problem is patients' noncompliance. Usually they stop the medication when they already feel well," he lamented.

Allhat: 'Mother' of all hypertension studies

CLOSE to 2,000 physicians recently gathered at the Philippine International Convention Center for the presentation of the results of the Allhat Study (Antihypertensive and Lipid-Lowering Treatment to Prevent Heart Attack), a landmark research on hypertension which the medical community worldwide has been eagerly discussing.

Doctors Esperanza Icasas-Cabral and Dante Morales, past presidents of the Philippine Heart Association, presented the results of the study, called by some as the mother of all hypertension trials with more than 40,000 patient-participants. The trial was initiated more than eight years ago and its results published recently in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The study evaluated three drugs: the diuretic chlorthalidone, the calcium antagonist amlodipine, and the angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor lisinopril. These classes of drugs are among the most frequently used antihypertensive drugs.

Comparable to diuretics

Study results showed that the calcium antagonist amlodipine is comparable to the time-tested diuretic in reducing the incidence of fatal coronary heart disease, nonfatal heart attacks, strokes and deaths. Amlodipine was similar to chlorthalidone in efficacy and safety among a broad range of patients.

Lisinopril did not fare as well, with the diuretic showing better efficacy in controlling blood pressure and preventing strokes in certain populations, specifically African-Americans.

High blood pressure (BP), a problem afflicting 18 to 22 percent of the adult population, has yet to be fully understood and adequately controlled. It is associated with a significantly increased risk of complications and deaths. Despite the available drugs in the antihypertensive armamentarium, doctors remain in a quandary as to which drug is ideal for BP control. Even in developed countries, adequate control of hypertension is a miserable 27 percent.

A survey by the PHA's Council of Hypertension showed that less than a third of Filipino hypertensives are taking medications, and less than 15 percent of hypertensive Filipinos have adequately controlled BP. Hence, they are called walking "time bombs" who are at risk of "exploding" with serious complications such as heart attacks and strokes.

What is alarming is that when Filipino hypertensives are seen by a physician for the first time, more than half already have significant vital organ complications particularly in the heart, brain and kidneys. Sometimes it's already too late because the complications are already severe and irreversible.

A good number of these hypertensives could not recall any symptom they could attribute to elevated BP. The absence of symptoms is, therefore, no assurance that one has no hypertension.

Aggressive treatment

Another major problem identified by experts is that even doctors who are literally bombarded with lectures and literature on hypertension do not seem too aggressive in controlling blood pressure. They may prescribe drugs for their hypertensive patients but are not aggressive enough in bringing down BP to the desired or optimal level at which complications may be prevented.

Research shows that BP should be ideally less than 130/90 for most people and 120/75 for those with diabetes and kidney disease.

Fortunately for hypertensives, there are a lot of drugs available which can suit them well, including their budget.

In the United States, diuretics (which help eliminate excess blood volume) and beta-blockers (which control the pumping of the heart) are still the preferred drugs since they've already stood the test of time. They have been shown to reduce cardiovascular risk in long-term clinical trials.

Current guidelines suggest that diuretics should be considered first for treating high BP. However, the BP of most patients could not be controlled with just one drug. Sixty percent of Allhat participants required multiple BP medications or combination therapy to reach their target BP goal.

Filling in the spaces

DISCOVER

Massie K. Santos

THERE'S a statistic somewhere which says the majority of vehicular accidents happen within a half-hour from one's home.

Of all the news stories about the space shuttle Columbia's disastrous return to Earth over the past few days, two pieces of information stood out for me.

The first was that the astronauts were 16 minutes away from landing when the shuttle blew up in the sky. Seven men and women actually escaped Earth's atmosphere, spent days in space seeing the stars and planets up close and floating in zero gravity, and then died minutes before they could share their experiences with family, friends and the entire world.

I could talk about all the theories surrounding the crash, and whether or not the thermal tiles—or lack thereof—raised the shuttle's temperature as it entered Earth's atmosphere and caused the shuttle to explode. But that's just too depressing in light of the 16 minutes factor.

8th casualty

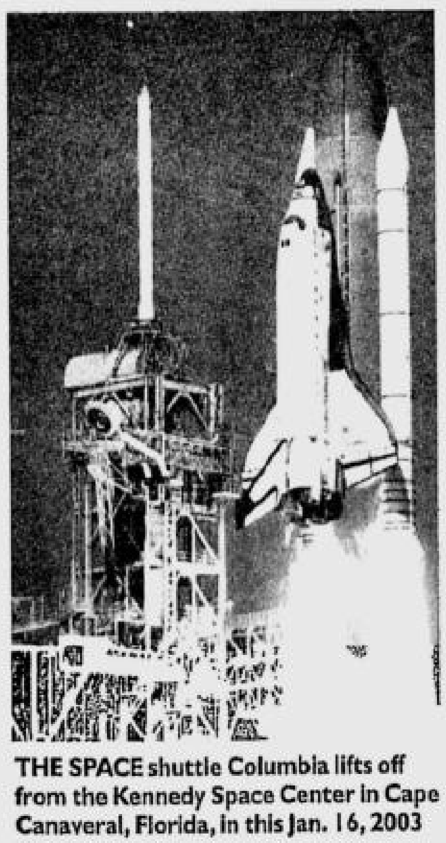
So I'll talk instead about the eighth casualty of the Columbia space shuttle—the science experiments on board.

Previous trips to space were mainly for the International Space Station or the Hubble telescope. Science experiments were occasionally performed and researchers in various fields were aided—such as when the photos taken by the space shuttle Endeavor located a 4,000-year-old lost city in Oman or when scientists studied the tectonic plates under Alaska.

Still, no single trip had been solely dedicated to scientific research in the past six years until the Columbia left Earth last January with 80 experiments.

In one case, one experiment took three years to get Nasa approval, and the researchers spent three more years training the astronauts to perform it in space.

Researchers working on muscle growth and development in outer space never got the blood samples each astronaut had donated twice a day for the study.



THE SPACE shuttle Columbia lifts off from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, in this Jan. 16, 2003 file photo. REUTERS

A group of biochemistry researchers, who were hoping that zero gravity environment would lead to the production of finer protein crystals to combat diseases like AIDS, not only lost the results of their experiments, but also the $20,000 already invested in computer chips to study the eagerly awaited data.

And International Flavors & Fragrances Inc. will never be able to market the new fragrance it was planning to create with the data the astronauts collected for them.

In 1998, the company had sent a miniature rose bush into space and the essential oils collected from that plant were later incorporated into Zen, a perfume produced by Shiseido. Unfortunately, the essential oils collected by the Columbia astronauts didn't survive the journey back, so no space scents will be showing up in the market in the next few years.

Not everything lost

But this is not to say that all the data collected was lost.

Nasa apparently cut back on TV programming for the shuttle so that the astronauts could send more data back to Earth, which turned out to be a really good idea under the circumstances.

A group of high school students spent four years designing an experiment to find out how ants tunneled in microgravity. Results sent back ahead of the shuttle showed that the ants didn't seem to notice that the gravity situation was different from that on Earth.

Researchers studying Earth's ozone levels and working on developing better car fuels by having the astronauts produce tiny flame balls in environments with very low levels of oxygen only received half the data the astronauts collected for them; the other half was left aboard the shuttle. Still, say members of these research teams, they lost less data than other scientists did.

Double grief

Given the time and effort put into designing and executing these experiments, one could only imagine the heartache these scientists felt when the Columbia went down. They grieved not just at the loss of the astronauts, who often worked on the experiments during their own time, but at the loss of data that had been so meticulously gathered.

The space program isn't going to end with the loss of the Columbia and her crew, nor will scientists stop designing experiments to be performed in outer space, but it will take a lot of time and money to get a space shuttle, the scientific equipment and most importantly, a trained crew with strong science and engineering backgrounds, together again to do everything the Columbia did.

And hopefully when the next trip to outer space takes place, everyone—and everything—on board makes it back home safely.

(The author may be reached at massie@massie.com.)

Stop taking Ancom, docs warn

By Tessa R. Salazar

STOP taking Ancom, a Chinese-developed drug that is popular in the Philippines because of its claim to control hypertension.

Doctors of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and the Philippine Lipid Society revealed that all 100-tablet bottles of Ancom Anti-Hypertensive Compound Tablets were already being recalled by its manufacturer, Herbsland Inc., in the United States.

The recall, conducted under the supervision of the US Food and Drug Administration, was accompanied by a warning to consumers who purchased the drug to immediately discontinue its use and return it for a full refund. US consumers were also urged to report to the US FDA's MedWatch program any adverse reaction to the product.

Ancom reportedly is being claimed as an antihypertensive and is packaged in blue and white labels. The 100-tablet bottles bear the manufacturer's name, Shanghai Pharmaceutical Industry Corp., Shanghai, China.

In the United States, Ancom tablets were sold over the counter through distributors and retail stores in the New York City metropolitan area.

Nationwide sales were coursed through the Internet, according to Medscape medical news.

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

Not registered

"We would like to warn Filipinos that they should heed the warning of the US FDA," said Dr. Esperanza I. Cabral, vice president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension.

Ancom is not registered with the Philippine Bureau of Food and Drugs. But people have access to the drug because of its many outside sources, according to doctors.

Cabral noted that Ancom was even available in the provinces.

Ancom contains a combination of several prescription drug ingredients, including reserpine, diazepam, promethiazine and hydrochlorothiazide, which pose serious health risks including sedation, depression and potentially life-threatening abnormalities of the blood, according to Medscape medical news.

No illnesses have been reported to date, but consumers who have used the product and have experienced any adverse reaction were urged to seek advice from their physicians for appropriate evaluation and treatment of their hypertension, said Medscape medical news.

The Bureau of Food and Drugs, meanwhile, issued Advisory 99-04 on Oct. 12, 1999 warning all drug store owners, pharmacists and consumers selling and using Ancom that the product "has been found to contain addictive substances."

"We have always said Ancom was illegal because it was not registered with the BFAD. The US FDA's pronouncement has just validated our opinion," Cabral said.

What makes Ancom appealing to Filipinos is its price—at P1 a pop.

Filipinos who don't have money for daily medications turned to Ancom, said Dr. Gregorio Patacsil Jr, president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension.

"Patients have stopped taking other medicines. This is a potentially harmful drug," Cabral said.

She said patients did not disclose to their doctors they were taking the drug.

Doctors also urged the local media to double check with medical experts the efficacy of herbal treatments.

"Celebrities are not the proper persons to endorse these products," said Cabral.

Heart-healthy and heartwarming news

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

IN THIS SEASON of hearts, let us focus on heart-healthy local alternatives to artery-clogging junk.

OK, banana chips may not be as calorie-free as carrot sticks, but they are certainly tastier! From Oriental Mindoro comes an export-quality product—Mikko banana crackers, stamped with the DOST seal of approval, no less.

A few years ago, the DOST decided to review local banana chip processing, and came up with a generally negative assessment. Problems included nonstandardized manufacturing processes; poor packaging, labeling and shelf life; clumping of slices; darkening of chips; molding; and even filth and microbial contamination.

The Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development, together with the Industrial Technology Development Institute, then developed a technology to standardize the process—from raw material gathering to storage. They also tried innovations such as low-fat chips (vacuum-fried, in case you're wondering), additive-free banana sauce, banana slices in light syrup, chips as breakfast cereal and flavored banana strings.

According to the S & T Post, "Records showed that banana chips or banana crackers were major products that gained tremendous acceptance in the world market.

"In 1992, banana chips were among the top agricultural exports, with an export value placed at $14 million. Banana chips ranked first in the Philippine export of dried fruits in 1994 with a total volume of 15,408,436 valued at $15.96 million. The growth of the industry for the last 10 years, however, has not been impressive due to problems such as inconsistent product quality and prices."

Mindanao website

We now focus on computer connectivity. The World Wide Web, indeed, has ensnared virtually every place. A heartwarming news is that Mindanao now has a website of its own—the Southern Mindanao Information Sharing Network (Smisnet).

An initiative of the Association of Regional Executives of National Agencies in Region 11 and the DOST, the Smisnet is geared toward promoting connectivity among key public and private organizations.

Science Secretary Estrella F. Alabastro opines, "The Smisnet will serve as an effective...virtual link between and among the various stakeholders in the development of Mindanao and the world at large."

She also hopes that Smisnet will boost regional development and enhance the quality of decision-making in the area.

Smisnet follows on the heels of the successful Cvisnet (Central Visayas Information Sharing Network) established in 1988 and now linking more than 120 agencies. Cvisnet was instrumental in community development through the establishment of barangay networks.

Punongbayan honored

Finally, we commend Phivolcs Director Raymundo S. Punongbayan, the recipient of the Sergei Soloviev Medal for 2003, the first Asian to be accorded that honor by the European Geophysical Society based in Munich, Germany.

Alan Taule of the DOST summarizes the reasons for this award: "Cited for his outstanding contributions in the area of disaster preparedness and natural hazard mitigation in the Philippines, Dr. Punongbayan gained national prominence for his expertise and sobriety during the devastating calamities that gripped the country at the onset of the '90s: the Baguio earthquake on July 16, 1990 and the Mt. Pinatubo eruption on June 15, 1991. His agency's expert handling of the monitoring and damage assessment aspects were key to the success of the coordinated disaster relief efforts during the two disasters."

The award was founded in 1996 in honor of Dr. Sergey Soloviev (1930-1994), a Russian seismologist who set new directions in seismology and tsunami research. It is given to scientists who have succeeded in improving our knowledge of the basic principles of natural hazards as well as their assessment and proper mitigation to protect the environment and the integrity of human life and socioeconomic systems.

Fiber-rich hotdog introduced in RP

By Charles E. Buban

MUCH have been reported about the nutritional benefits of dietary fiber. In fact food manufacturers have incorporated fiber in many of their products.

CDO-Foodsphere Inc., in cooperation with the Belgian company Orafti Active Food Ingredients, recently incorporated enriched inulin fiber in its hotdog product, which they claim is the first in the world.

Inulin was recently added to the list of dietary fibers.

The American Association of Cereal Chemists defined dietary fiber as being made up of edible parts of plants or analogous carbohydrates that are resistant to digestion and absorption in the human small intestines.

Inulin fiber is a high-grade ingredient composed of chicory inulin enriched with a specific fraction of oligofructose.

Wonder ingredient

"Inulin and oligofructose are found in more than 36,000 plants and in many common vegetables and cereals like onions, leeks and wheat. Both ingredients are obtained through hot water extraction, purification and spray drying," Dr. Trinidad Trinidad, a senior scientist at the Food and Nutrition Research Institute said during a a recent health forum.

Many experts now believe inulin fiber is a wonder ingredient that may contain nutritional benefits. They say that because it is completely fermented in the colon, inulin fiber may contribute to a better gut function, improved bowel movement and reduced incidence of constipation.

"The Belgian company's research has resulted in Bibbo! Hotdogs, the world's first product enriched with this high-grade fiber," announced Raymond Koh, regional manager of Orafti.

Fiber intake

According to Trinidad, a person needs to take 20 to 25 grams of fiber a day.

"The World Health Organization also reports that almost everyone in the world eats less than the recommended dietary allowance of fiber," Trinidad noted.

While there is no specific recommended dietary allowance for fiber, many scientists believe that the average individual should take between 30 grams and 60 grams of fiber each day.

Diets which are high in fiber are generally adequate in all nutrients. The greater the fiber in the diet the greater the amount of fluids that needs to be taken.

Ultrasound confab Feb. 10-13

THE PHILIPPINE Society of Ultrasound in Clinical Medicine (PSUCMI) will hold its first annual convention on Feb. 10-13 at the Philippine Children's Medical Center conference room on Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Attending the convention are Dr. Hiroki Watanabe, president of the World Federation of Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology, and Dr. Kittipong Vairojanavong, president of the Asian Federation of Societies of Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology (Afsum).

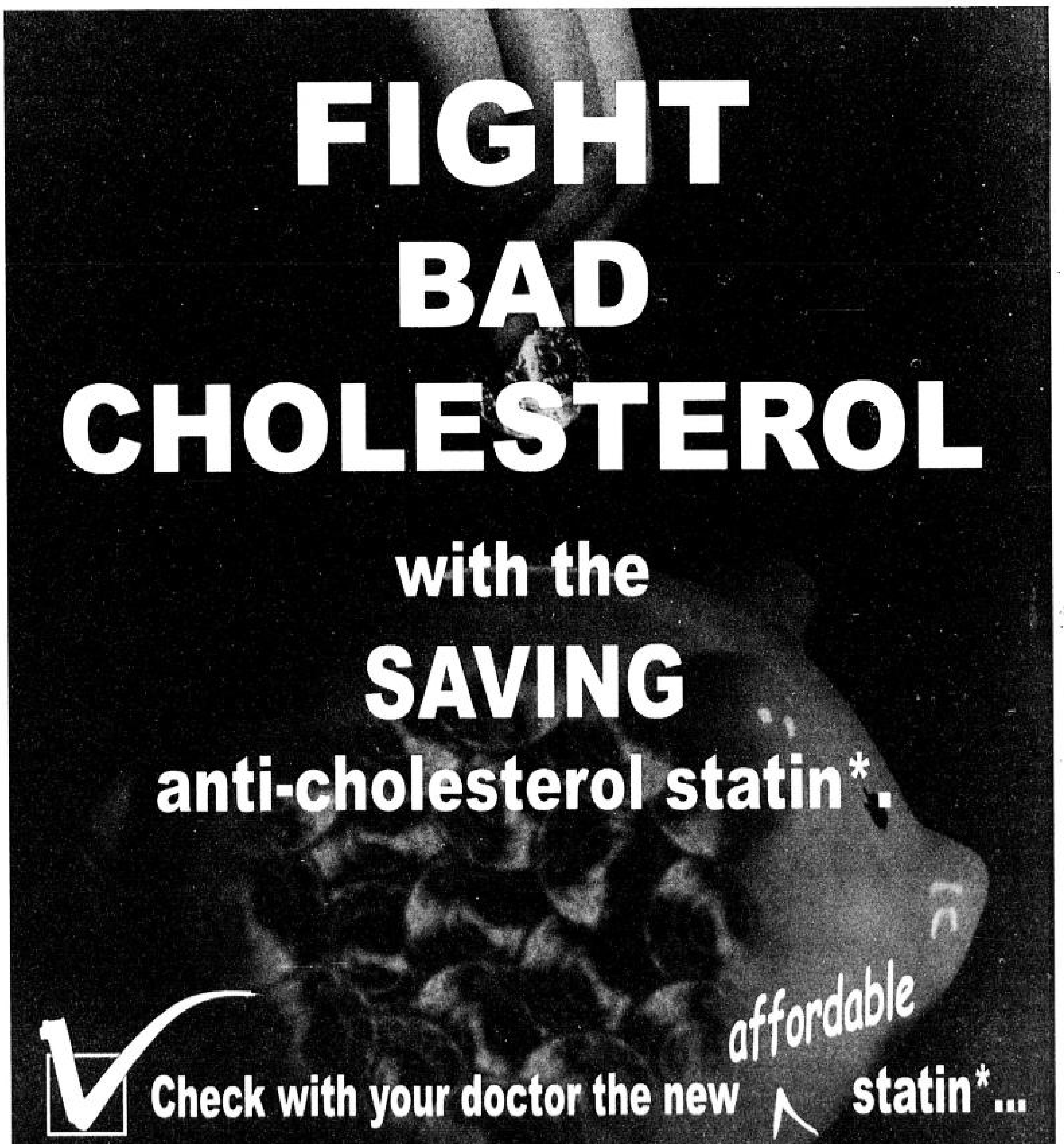
There will be five modules with hands-on lecture demonstrations. Topics during the plenary session on Feb. 10 include hydrocephalus, cerebral hemodynamics, congenital heart disease, and overview of 3D ultrasound.

Simultaneous sessions on cardiology in the afternoon will focus on topics ranging from fetal arrythmia to doppler applications of fetal echo. In general surgery, the topics are ultrasound use in trauma, anorectum, abdominal and intraoperative.

The Feb. 11 sessions will take up advanced ultrasound in obstetrics including color doppler, 3D ultrasound assessment of fetal brain. Doppler ultrasound of microcirculation will also be discussed.

On Feb. 12, the simultaneous sessions in pediatrics will deal with ultrasound assessment of abdominal pain, vomiting while gynecology sessions will tackle the use of color doppler, breast and urogenital tract ultrasound. On Feb. 13, the talks will be on neurology ultrasound on CNS infections, brain injury and congenital malformation. Carotid doppler and interventional neurosonalogy will also be discussed.

PSUCMI officers are Dr. Corazon Yabes-Almirante, president, OB-Gyn, perinatology; Dr. Jose Robles, vice-president, neurology; Dr. Amaryllis Digna O. Yazon, secretary, OB-Gyn, perinatology; Dr. Sol M. Pangan, treasurer, OB-Gyn, perinatology; Dr. Edward N. Padilla, PRO, OB-Gyn, perinatology.


FIGHT
BAD
CHOLESTEROL
with the
SAVING
anti-cholesterol statin*.

☑ Check with your doctor the new affordable statin*...

Recent landmark trials have shown the beneficial effects of the cholesterol-lowering drug known as statins. [1]
Statins help prolong lives, lower heart-related deaths, prevent heart attacks and strokes...
only IF they are taken for at least 3 years, religiously. [2]
COST of statins though is a big barrier to compliance.

Now for Life!

REFERENCES:
[1] Kjekshus et al. Reducing the risk of Coronary Events: Evidence from the Scandinavian Simvastatin Survival Study (4S) Am J Cardiol 1995; 76:64C-68C.
[2] Heart Protection Study Collaborative Group MRC/BHF Heart Protection Study of cholesterol lowering with simvastatin in 20,536 high-risk individuals: a randomized placebo controlled trial. The Lancet 2002 July; 360 (9236): 7-22.

* This class of drug is approved for sale by BFAD as a prescription drug and should be bought only with a prescription.

A public health service announcement from theraphārma
Your partner in cardiovascular healthcare.

Overcoming obstacles to lifestyle change

By Esperanza A. Icasas-Cabral, MD
Contributor

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

WE are all creatures of habit because there is comfort in consistency. The predictability of what we are going to do and when we are going to do it lessens stress and anxiety. When our routines are tied to pleasure, we not only continue to practice them without question, we also try to find every reason not to change them.

But a number of our habits may be self-destructive. Although we may know these practices to be dysfunctional, we fail to even acknowledge the harm that they might be doing.

Sedentary living, poor eating habits and smoking are all accepted parts of daily life. Everything is OK as long as we are able to function, and we feel no reason to change especially if we derive pleasure from our routines.

Almost everyone attests to the health benefits of a balanced diet, regular exercise and abstinence from smoking.

But the vast majority who begin a program of healthy eating, exercise or smoking cessation eventually abandon it. Numerous excuses such as lack of time, discomfort, inconvenience and expense are given.

Each is a legitimate reason, but at the core of these excuses lies a deeper cause—the unwillingness to make a lifestyle change.

Three reasons

Why are we so resistant to lifestyle change? There are numerous reasons, but three stand out.

The first is a defense mechanism called denial—the refusal to believe that something bad can happen to us. Denial prevents the smoker from acknowledging the known and predictable harm that cigarette smoke brings him and those around him.

The second is the assumption that to restructure our behavior indicates that the way we have been conducting our lives has been wrong. To begin eating a balanced and healthy diet means that for the past years we have made the mistake of eating too much fatty food and not enough fruits and vegetables.

Third, we resist making a lifestyle change because we are fearful of change itself. Doing things differently involves resetting our priorities, reorganizing our lives and taking on a new set of values.

When we decide to become more health conscious, we will need to take an inventory of how we conduct our lives. It is really much easier to continue with our old habits than to undergo that kind of scrutiny. With change also comes an evaluation of what we are undergoing. Are we doing it right? Will the change really help? What will others say? Will I be a success or a failure?

Whoever said change was easy? Just ask the smoker who is trying to quit or the couch potato who is trying to get more physical.

Willingness is the absolute prerequisite to changing one's lifestyle. Taking action is not necessarily the next step. Very often, we think about it, then talk about it and finally, with the right support and a big leap of faith, we initiate the change.

Breaking the barriers

Here are a few tips to help you break the barriers to a successful lifestyle change.

- **Understand what you are up against.** Do you have difficulty starting an exercise program? Your barriers could include embarrassment and anxiety about your physical appearance and lack of confidence in your physical abilities. If maintaining regular exercise is your major struggle, your obstacles could be boredom and perceived lack of time.
- **Progress your lifestyle change.** Once your exercise program is under way, you may find yourself on a plateau where your fitness level does not seem to improve at all. Do not be discouraged. A little additional exercise may be all that is needed to push you to a new level.
- **Build confidence through education.** Learning from the media or from professionals will pay off through increased confidence. Don't expect to automatically know a new exercise or what a low fat diet means. There is nothing wrong with being a beginner and the more information you get the better your chances of maintaining your lifestyle change.
- **Set realistic short-term goals.** If your goal is to lose 50 pounds, it will be quite sometime before you reach it. Create a goal that is easier and faster to accomplish, and when you get there set the next goal.
- **Support yourself.** If you make a poor food choice or miss a workout, forgive yourself and get back on track at the next meal or the next gym session.
- **Set yourself up in a supportive environment.** Find friends with similar goals and go through your lifestyle change with them.
- **Reframe your thinking.** Tending to your health and looking after your physical health is saying that you are worthwhile and deserve special treatment. When you take care of your health, you prove to yourself that you are important and special.

(Dr. Cabral is a past president of the Philippine Heart Association and the current vice president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension.)

Preventing heart disease through cholesterol control

By Khristine G. Estrada
Contributor

EXPERTS from the Philippine Heart Association are putting emphasis on healthy lifestyle as the best strategy in stemming the alarming cardiovascular disease epidemic. They also agree that bad cholesterol, especially in the presence of other risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension and smoking, is a major culprit in causing heart disease.

Getting diagnosed with high blood cholesterol can bring about drastic changes in one's lifestyle. Managing your cholesterol level means cutting back on fat, exercising, losing weight and quitting smoking. You also literally pay a high price for cholesterol-lowering drugs that have to be taken religiously for a minimum of three years before clinical benefits can be achieved.

In our culture where we find a thousand and one reasons to celebrate and thus indulge in fat-laden food, proper cholesterol management can indeed be a big challenge.

Good, bad types

The need to keep cholesterol levels at bay is essential because the level of bad cholesterol in the body has a lot to do with one's chances of getting heart disease. The higher the level of bad cholesterol—or low-density lipoprotein (LDL)—the greater would be the risk for developing heart disease or having a heart attack.

Hence, experts recommend that specific levels of LDL and the good type of cholesterol—or high-density lipoprotein (HDL)—be checked during routine blood examination. Cholesterol-HDL ratio must also be determined to see whether the individual is at risk or not.

There are different normal LDL levels or target goals for those who are normal with no risk factors, those who have risk factors but no heart disease, and those who have heart disease or diabetes.

Perils of fatty food

People with risk factors, particularly diabetics, should keep in mind the complications of abnormal cholesterol levels when they find it difficult to say no to tempting foods with high saturated fat.

Fat-laden foods contain cholesterol that go into your blood and build up in the walls of your arteries. Over time, this buildup causes your arteries to harden. Arteries then become narrower and blood flow to the heart, brain, kidneys and other vital organs is compromised. This condition is known as atherosclerosis.

Blood carries oxygen to the vital organs, and if not enough blood and oxygen reach your heart or brain, you may suffer from chest pains or dizziness. If blood supply is completely cut off, the result is a heart attack or stroke.

There are several factors which can affect a person's cholesterol level, including food intake, age, gender and heredity. Cholesterol levels tend to rise as one gets older. Women have lower total cholesterol levels than men but this has a tendency to rise dramatically after menopause. Your genes partly determine how much cholesterol your body produces.

Effective drugs

Fortunately, there are several types of cholesterol-lowering drugs, including statins which are considered to be very effective. Statins lower LDL-cholesterol levels by slowing down the production of cholesterol and increasing the liver's ability to remove the LDL-cholesterol already in the blood.

One of the most scientifically documented statins is simvastatin, which has been shown in a big landmark study to be beneficial across all population groups and even in patients with average cholesterol levels.

These life-extending statins, however, are quite expensive, which is one big factor in patients' poor drug compliance. Therapharma, a division of Unilab, has introduced an affordable brand of simvastatin which is hoped to improve the compliance problem.

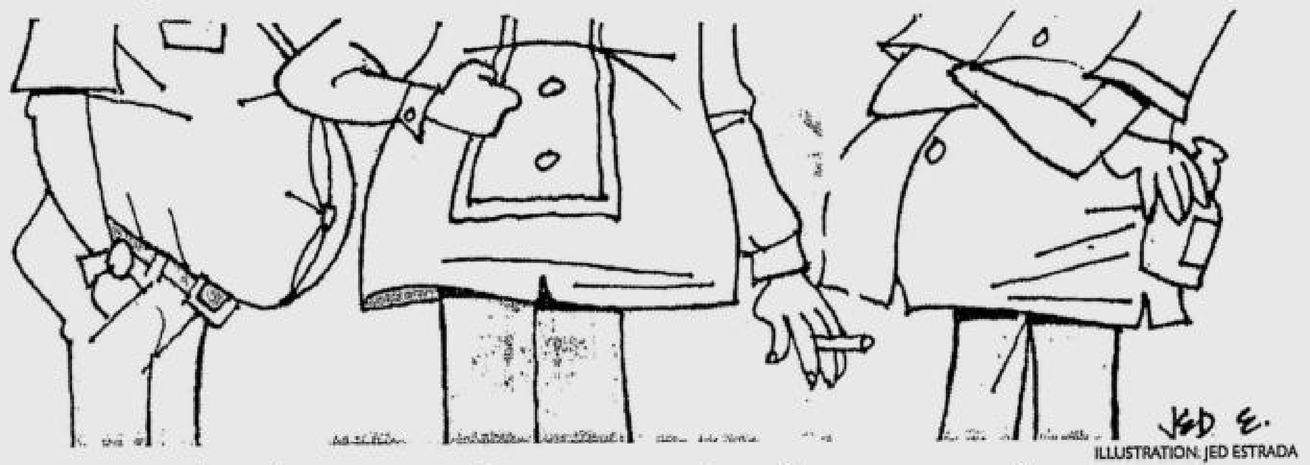


ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

Metabolic syndrome: A cluster of woes

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

ROLLY A., a middle-aged insurance company executive, was a little overweight, but that was not really a big issue for him. The extra weight was only around the stomach. Because this never really bothered him, he considered himself perfectly healthy.

Little did Rolly realize that his being a little "pleasantly plump" was the only visible sign of a little-known but potentially deadly disorder called metabolic syndrome. That was until he was rushed to the emergency room after suffering a heart attack, which, fortunately, he survived.

Until the last five years, metabolic syndrome was not a well-recognized entity. Various studies have now shown that men with metabolic syndrome are at significantly greater risk of dying from a heart attack and other cardiovascular diseases (CVD).

"This has been evolving now for several years," said Dr. Steven Nissen, a cardiologist at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. "(M)etabolic syndrome is really the disease of the new millennium. We now understand that men and women with this syndrome constiture the group at greatest risk of death from heart attack."

More cases

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one in five adults has metabolic syndrome, and that the numbers will continue to grow because of the prevailing sedentary lifestyle, with people more inclined to watch TV rather than exercise.

"Metabolic syndrome has been there for a while," said Dr. Richard Nesto, a professor at the Harvard Medical School and a clinician at the Lahey Clinic in Boston. "We just have not recognized its importance.

"I think doctors in the past have looked at patients without looking at the big picture. They looked at risk factors in isolation and treated them one by one. We should now look at patients as to whether they have metabolic syndrome."

Do you have it?

The National Cholesterol Education Program in the United States defined metabolic syndrome as the presence of three or more of the following:

- Abdominal fat—in most men, a 40-inch waistline or greater
- High blood sugar—at least 110 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) after fasting
- High triglicerides—at least 150 mg/dL in the bloodstream
- Low high-density lipoprotein (HDL), the good type of cholesterol—less than 40 mg/dL
- Blood pressure of 130/85 or higher.

The World Health Organization definition includes elevated insulin levels or elevated fasting blood sugar—defined as a fasting blood glucose of 101-109 mg/dL (5.6-6.0 mmol/L)—along with two or more of the following:

- Abdominal obesity
- Dyslipidemia
- Hypertension.

Increased insulin, or hyperinsulinemia, with resulting insulin resistance is reported to have an unfavorable effect on the cardiovascular system, specifically on the blood vessels, making them less flexible and more prone to atherosclerosis.

Assessing risks

"If you look at the individual risk factors, they don't look all that grave," said Dr. Nissen. "But when you put them together, they equal a lot more than the sum of the parts. And that's what a study like this shows."

A new study recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Association has shown that middle-aged men with the syndrome are more likely to develop CVD or coronary heart disease (CHD) or to die from any cause compared with men who don't have the syndrome.

Researchers studied 1,209 Finnish men who were between 42 and 60 and had no history of CVD, cancer or diabetes. They obtained data on potential cardiovascular risk factors, including age, body mass index, waist circumference and waist-to-hip ratio, smoking status, blood pressure, blood lipids, blood glucose and insulin metabolism. They then tracked the cases of CVD, CHD and death that occurred in the following 11 years.

The researchers found that those with metabolic syndrome were 2.9 to 4.2 times more likely to die of a heart attack than those who did not have the condition.

"To our knowledge, this is the first prospective population-based cohort study reporting the association of metabolic syndrome using recently proposed definitions with cardiovascular and overall mortality," study author Dr. Hanna-Maaria Lakka of Louisiana State University wrote in the journal.

Blood clot

Previous research has shown that people with metabolic syndrome have blood that tend to clot more easily. They also are more likely to rupture the atherosclerotic plaque in their bloodstream which promotes more blood clot that later totally clog their arteries.

"I now see patients in their 20s and 30s with metabolic syndrome and this does not bode well for their risk of heart attack and stroke when they (reach) 40 or 50 years of age," said Dr. Nesto.

While medications can treat some of the problems of metabolic syndrome, the best solution is the simplest—exercising regularly, getting more physical activity and losing weight, even if one is just a little on the plump side. No pharmaceutical breakthrough can ever be an acceptable substitute for this.

First treatment for acute ischemic stroke launched

INGELHEIM, Germany—Boehringer Ingelheim has announced the European launch of Actilyse (alteplase) as the first and only treatment for acute ischemic stroke after being approved by the European Commission.

The EC approved the use of the Actilyse treatment of selected patients with acute ischemic stroke in the 0- to 3-hour window, based on the results of international clinical trials.

"This development represents an important first step forward in a disease area that has traditionally been limited to supportive and rehabilitative care," said Dr. Andreas Barner, member of Boehringer Ingelheim's board of managing directors and responsible for research and development and medicine.

Said Barner: "A treatment which can reduce the disabling effects of acute stroke will improve the quality of life for a significant number of people who would otherwise survive a stroke but remain permanently disabled. We consider it to be very important that Actilyse is used in the patient population where benefit has been demonstrated.

"We will work hard to ensure that Actilyse is used in specialist stroke units that are registered with the Safe Implementation of Thrombolysis in Stroke Monitoring System (SITS-MOST)."

"An accompanying clinical trial investigating treatment in the 3- to 4-hour time window after stroke onset will also be performed, although it is emphasized that the earlier the patient can receive treatment with Actilyse the better."

Prof. Nils Wahlgren, head of stroke research at the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm and chair of SITS-MOST, added: "The introduction of alteplase in conjunction with the development of SITS-MOST, will ensure that patients receive maximum benefit from this new development in stroke management. Patient safety is paramount, so the SITS register has been developed to provide guidance and support for all those clinicians wishing to use alteplase, and SITS-MOST will document that."

People who survive a stroke with permanent disabilities place an enormous burden on health and social services budgets. There is evidence to show that treating stroke patients in the short term brings about long-term cost benefits:

- A recent economic evaluation found that the increase in hospitalization costs associated with alteplase treatment was more than offset by savings in rehabilitation and nursing home care.
- A National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) trial reported in 1995 that the average length of hospital stay was significantly shorter in alteplase-treated patients, who were also more likely to be sent home rather than being discharged to a nursing home or to in-patient rehabilitation.
- The NINDS trial demonstrated that patients receiving alteplase within three hours of onset of symptoms were at least 30 percent more likely to have minimal, or no disability, three months after their stroke.

Dr. Manfred Haehl, Boehringer Ingelheim's medical director, who presented an overview of the company's research activities in the area of stroke, said:

"Actilyse is an important milestone in Boehringer Ingelheim's commitment to the development of drugs for stroke. We have developed and provided Aggrenox, a highly efficacious drug for the secondary prevention of ischemic stroke. In addition, phase 2 clinical research is ongoing with BIII 890, a potential neuro-protectant for the treatment of acute stroke which may be expected to add to our armamentarium alone and in combination with Actilyse.

"Stroke remains an area of challenge and high medical need. Therefore, we are very pleased that the European Commission has made it possible for Boehringer Ingelheim to move toward providing Actilyse for use in ischemic stroke across Europe. We are confident that Actilyse, if used appropriately, will deliver benefit to thousands of people."

Because of the nature of thrombolysis, alteplase is suitable for patients who suffer an acute ischemic stroke, which is diagnosed using CT or MRI scanning techniques.

The European Medicines Evaluation Agency has defined specific criteria for the use of Actilyse in the labeling, which are fully supported by Boehringer Ingelheim. The drug will be supplied to centers with facilities to monitor the use of Actilyse treatment and should only be administered by physicians trained and experienced in neurological care. Exclusion of hemorrhagic stroke by CT scan is essential and treatment must be started within three hours of onset of symptoms.

Philippine Society of Hypertension

Joint 8th Annual Convention

February 10 - 12, 2003
EDSA Shangri-la Hotel, Mandaluyong City

"Hand in Hand in Health"

Philippine Lipid Society

MESSAGES MESSAGES MESSAGES MESSAGES MESSAGES MESSAGES MESSAGES

Office of the President of the Philippines

Malacañan, Palace
Manila
10 February 2003

I send my cordial greetings to the **Philippine Society of Hypertension** and the **Philippine Lipid Society** on its *Joint 8th Annual Convention.*

Your continued service manifests your steadfast commitment in updating yourselves with the latest trends and issues in the proper diagnosis and treatment of hypertension and lipid related ailments. In addressing the concerns related to such prevalent and debilitating diseases, you help in ensuring that every Filipino will have a healthy and productive life.

Let us work hand in hand in delivering quality healthcare services for our countrymen, especially the poor and the needy. Together, I am confident that we can construct a strong Republic that makes a difference in the lives of its citizens.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

The PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF HYPERTENSION (PSH) and the PHILIPPINE LIPID SOCIETY (PLS) are pleased to welcome you to the Joint 8th Annual Convention, the theme of which is "Hand in Hand in Health."

Gathered together are members of various organizations. Among them are the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH), Philippine Lipid Society (PLS), Department of Health (DOH), Asian Union for Microcirculation (AUM), Philippine College of Physicians (PCP), Philippine Heart Association (PHA), Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism (PSEM), Philippine Diabetes Association (PDA), Stroke Society of the Philippines (SSP), Philippine Society of Nephrology (PSN), Philippine Association of Government Medical Practitioners, Inc. (PAGMPI), Philippine Academy of Military Surgeons (PAMS), Philippine Academy for Public School Health Inc. (PAPSHI), Philippine College of Occupational Medicine (PCOM), Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight and Obesity (PASOO),), Institute for the Study of Diabetes Foundation (ISDF), Philippine Nurses Association (PNA), Organizations of Health Nurses Association of the Philippines (OHNAP), Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI), Nutritionist Dieticians Associations of the Philippines (NDAP), Philippine Health Social Science Association (PHSSA), Philippine Association for Medical Technologist (PAMET), Philippine Physical Therapists Association (PPTA) and Integrated Midwives Association of the Philippines (IMAP). All 24 represent diverse orientations. However, our common goal is the management of the Number One killer in the country today and in the years to come - DISSEMINATED ATHEROSLEROSIS.

Atherosclerosis with the attendant thrombosis is the pathophysiologic basis of coronary cerebral artery disease, the most frequent cause of death and disability among adults in the Philippines today. We have to act collectively now as the problem is getting bigger and more complex as time passes by. We look forward to this dialogue and the active participation of the members of the participating medical societies and professional health organizations. We hope that every one attending this convention will go home not only with new knowledge and insights into prevention and control of atherosclerosis, but more importantly, with firmer commitments in achieving our goal.

Let us join together with our countrymen to meet this challenge of controlling atherosclerosis.

GREGORIO B. PATACSIL, JR., M.D.
President
Philippine Society of Hypertension

DANTE D. MORALES, M.D.
President
Philippine Lipid Society

Department of Health
Manila

My warmest greetings to the officers and members of the **Philippine Society of Hypertension, Inc.** and the **Philippine Lipid Society** on the holding of their **Joint 8th Annual Convention** entitled: ***"Hand in Hand in Health"***.

You have been invaluable partners in providing affordable healthcare among hundreds of our people in the field of cardiovascular management and understanding on the prevention and control of these diseases, rehabilitation and optimum care of patients.

I laud the officers for working together in this significant endeavor to provide new knowledge and insights to further enhance the expertise and experience of health professionals involved in the care of patients with cardiovascular diseases.

As you aim to enhance your members' knowledge and skills through this convention, I urge you likewise focus on instilling among yours ranks the necessary values of integrity, excellence and compassion --- values that one must possess as a service-oriented health professional.

May the significance of this occasion inspire and motivate our health providers to actively respond to the challanges of the future. Once again, congratulations and I salute your organizations for this effort.

Mabuhay po kayong lahat!

MANUEL M. DAYRIT, M.D. MSc.
Secretary of Health

Philippine Society of Hypertension
Philippine Lipid Society

Joint 8th Annual Convention
Hand in Hand in Health

February 10 - 12, 2003
EDSA Shangri-La Hotel
Mandaluyong City

Philippine Medical Association
Quezon City

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Governors of the Philippine Medical Association, we heartily greet the officers and members of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and the Philippine Lipid Society on this momentous occasion, the Joint 8th Annual Convention, on the theme, "Hand in Hand in Health".

We at the PMA are honored to be a part of this grandiose undertaking. With the awesome support of some twenty affiliate societies and other allied health professionals accross the country, this scientific assemblage could not help being a glittering showcase of interactive and informative interchange of scientific expertise and knowledge in the control of hypertension and lipid disorders. You, the men and women at the helm of these socities, deserve all commendation in coping with the rapid progress of the times. We applaud you for taking a second look at old and festering diseases with the view of translating new modalities of control and management to meet the evolving needs of medical practice and of our patients. With optimism, we join you in looking forward to a most rewarding and meaningful annual convention.

"PMA 100 Years - Continuing the Challange for a Healthy Nation," the national annual convention theme, enjoins you vigorously continue bringing effective and affordable healthcare to our people. At the same time, we cordially invite you to celebrate with us on September 15, 2003, the PMA 100th Anniversary on the theme, *"100 Years of PMA in Nation Building - Service to the People for a Healthy Philippines."*

Congratulations. Mabuhay ang Philippine Society of Hypertension, Inc., at ang Philippine Lipid Society.

GIL C. FERNANDEZ, M.D.
President

The Philippine Society of Hypertension and the Philippine Lipid Society welcomes you to their Joint 8th Annual Convention.

There are numerous developments and tremendous advances that continue to emerge in the fields of hypertension and lipidology. This scientific assembly is undoubtedly an appropriate occasion to highlight the progress in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of hypertension and lipid disorders that has been made in the past year. Our annual convention also gives us the opportunity to review the good practice of medicine in our particular areas of interest. Through the diverse topics that have been lined up for the scientific sessions, we are optimistic that our appreciation of the management modalities will be enhanced and our collective grasp of these recent events will be further refined.

One of the key features of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and the Philippine Lipid Society is the recognition that the control and treatment of hypertension and atherosclerosis require the cooperation not only of multiple scientific and medical disciplines but also that of the patients, their families and the community at large. Thus, our theme, "Hand in Hand in Health."

Our cooperating agencies and delegates represent various scientific and social persuasions and we look forward to lively and high level discussions that will showcase the various approaches to hypertension and atherosclerosis from the viewpoints of cardiologists, endocrinologists, nephrologists, neurologists as well as social scientists, nurses, nutritionists and other allied health professionals. We are fortunate to have effective speakers and we expect exciting debates and discussions from all the participants.

Let this be a fruitful scientific experience but may it also be a venue for camaraderie as we meet new friends and renew fellowship with our long-standing ones.

ESPERANZA I. CABRAL. M.D.
Overall Chair, Organizing Committee
Vice-President
Philippine Society of Hypertension
Philippine Lipid Society

PROGRAM - AT - A GLANCE

	February 9 Sunday	February 10 Monday	February 11 Tuesday	February 12 Wednesday
7:00	REGISTRATION			
8:00			**PLENARY SESSION 2** Gestational Hyperglycemia and its Prognosis *(Isla 2)*	**PLENARY SESSION 3** Cost of Hypertension and Dyslipidemia Management in the Philippines *(Isla 2)*
8:30		**OPENING CEREMONIES**		
9:00		**PLENARY SESSION 1** Relevance of Microvascular Disease in Hypertension Syndrome *(Isla 2)*	**LATE BREAKING CLINICAL TRIALS** • All HOT (Hypertension Optimal Treatment) Study • Women's Health Initiative – HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) • Prevention Program on Diabetes • PROSPER (Prospective Study of Pravastatin in the Elderly at Risk) *(Isla 2)*	**SYMPOSIUM 7** Battling the Obesity Epidemic • Lessons from the Past, Planning for the Future • Whiz Kids through Fitness: A PASOO Project • Optimizing Weight Management: Are We in the Right Direction? *(Isla 1)* **SYMPOSIUM 8** Philippine Research Output - DOH - FNRI - PAPSHI - PASOO *(Isla 3)*
9:30		**OPENING OF EXHIBITS**		
10:00		VISIT THE EXHIBITS / COFFEE BREAK	VISIT THE EXHIBITS / COFFEE BREAK	VISIT THE EXHIBITS / COFFEE BREAK
10:30		**SYMPOSIUM 1** Nutritional Issues in Cardiovascular Disease • Cutting Body Fat Through Weight Loss Schemes and Diet • Practical Food Guide for Filipinos • Status of Coconut Oil in Relation to Atherosclerosis - Philippine Perspective *(Isla 2)*	**SYMPOSIUM 2** Prognostic Implications of Pre-Hypertensive State • Intrauterine Growth Retardation and Development of Chronic Degenerative Diseases • Impact of High Normal BP in CVD Risk • BP Measuring Devices - Which One? • Blood Pressure Targets in Hypertension Treatment • White Coat Hypertension - Its Implications *(Isla 1)* **SYMPOSIUM 3** Emerging Markers for Future CVD • Why is Microalbuminuria Associated with Rise of CVD • Role of Insulin Resistance in Subclinical Atherosclerosis • Inflammation in Atherosclerosis *(Isla 3)*	**SYMPOSIUM 9** Diabetes is a Cardiovascular Disease • Determinants of Accelerated Coronary Disease in Type 2 Diabetes and their Therapeutic Implications • Thiazolidinediones in Amelioration of Cardiovascular Risk in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus • Pathophysiological and Metabolic Interventions to Decrease Cardiovascular Morbidity and Mortality in Patients with Glucose Intolerance and Diabetes *(Isla 1)* **SYMPOSIUM 10** Microvascular Circulation as Predictors for Cardiovascular Disease • Correlation of Laser Doppler Flow Rate with Metabolic-Parameters in Non-Human Primates • Evaluation of Pre-Clinical Atherosclerosis • Catheter-Based Delivery of Fibroblast Growth Factor *(Isla 3)*
11:00				
11:30				
12:00		**LUNCH SATELLITE SYMPOSIA** Aventis Pharma *(Isla 1)* Pfizer, Inc. *(Isla 2)* MSD *(Isla 3)*	**LUNCH SATELLITE SYMPOSIA** Servier *(Isla 1)* Laboratoires Fournier *(Isla 2)* Glaxo SmithKline *(Isla 3)* Novartis *(Palawan)*	**LUNCH SATELLITE SYMPOSIA** Solvay Pharma *(Isla 1)* Laboratoires Fournier *(Isla 2)* Therapharma *(Isla 3)*
12:30				
13:00				
13:30		VISIT THE EXHIBITS	VISIT THE EXHIBITS	VISIT THE EXHIBITS
14:00	**Pre-Convention Workshop** BASICS OF CLINICAL EPIDEMIOLOGY *(Santan)*	**HYPERTENSION MANAGMENT OPTIONS FOR PRIMARY CARE** Treatment Options for HPN *(Isla 1)* **BP CERTIFICATION CLASS** MD's, Nurses & other allied health prof *(Isla 3)*	**SYMPOSIUM 4** Carotid Artery Disease • Fluid Dynamics in Vascular Pathology • Diagnostic & Therapeutic Options for Carotid Artery Disease in the Philippines • Status of Carotid Endorectomy vs. Carotid Stenting in the Philippine *(Isla 1)* **SYMPOSIUM 5** Familial Hypercholesterolemia - A Therapeutic Challange • Genetic Basis of Familial Hypercholesterolemia • Worldwide Perspective on Familial Hypercholesterolemia • Local Initiatives on Familial Hypercholesterolemia • Challenges in the Treatment of Familial Hypercholesterolemia *(Isla 3)*	**SYMPOSIUM 11** Rational Mono & Combination Treatment in HPN • Best Practices in Lifestyle Modification in the Treatment of Hypertension • Is one Antihypertensive Better than the Others? • Practical Options to Combination Treatment *(Isla 1)* **SYMPOSIUM 12** Paradigm Shift in Treatment of Dyslipidemia • Oxidized LDL & HDL: Antagonists in Atherothrombosis • The New Lipid Practice Recommendations: Closing the Therapeutic Gap in Patients with Diabetes • Looking Beyond Cholesterol Lowering *(Isla 3)*
14:30				
15:00				
15:30		**LAY FORUM** • HEALTH PROMOTION - How to improve compliance to lifestyle modifications • LIFESTYLE CHANGES - When Smoking is Dangerous to your Health and how to Kick the Habit • TIPS ON EXERCISE 1 ACTIVITY - Little things that you can do everyday • COPING WITH STRESS • ENJOYING SEX IN HEART DISEASE • UNDERSTANDING THE SUFFERING PATIENT • A Birds Eye View of Alternative in the Philippines *(Palawan)*	VISIT THE EXHIBITS / COFFEE BREAK **SYMPOSIUM 6** Drugs in Strokes - Which one and Why? • Secondary Prevention of Ischemic Stroke • Management of Hypertension in Ischemic Stroke • Management of Hypertensive Intracerebral Hemorrhage *(Isla 1)*	**BUSINESS MEETING** PSH PLS *(Isla Ballroom 2)*
16:00				
16:30				
17:00				
17:30				
18:00		**DINNER SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM** Therapharma *(Isla Ballroom)*	**DINNER SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM** Merck, Inc. *(Isla II)*	
18:30				
19:00				
19:30				
20:00				

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Mother of all butter

IT SEEMS that, as the rhetoric suggests, war is inevitable, and the mother of all lopsided battles will be fought again between Saddam and another Bush.

We all think that war is getting closer. Although we have been expecting the fighting for a long time now, we still have to get over all the worrying.

Even before the war starts, you see, we are already paying for the "inevitable" war in many ways. Look, the peso-dollar rate is going berserk again.

That means that the price of everything will go up. In this country, we import everything, including our foreign policy, which is made in the US of A.

* * *

IN particular, I worry because I know, anytime soon, I will get a call from my mother. Oil prices are going up, which leads to higher prices of fuel and, thus, electricity.

My mother hates surprises, such as when her electricity bill goes up without any warning. Of course I cannot tell her that everybody's bill goes up, too.

I can almost hear her ask me, "why is my electric bill going up again," in a tone which says that I am a useless son of his mother for failing to stop the increase.

Every son worries when his mother complains about things. No son ever wants to let his mother down. Even big boys like Shaquille!

When my mother complains about her electricity bill, I become a young boy again, wanting to protect her from this torment.

To ease her mind, I invent all sorts of explanation. Maybe you are using the electric flat iron too much. Next day everybody in her household wears wrinkled clothes.

* * *

REALLY, simple folk like my mother think of the world of their children.

I will not be surprised if every vendor in Farmers Market knows that my mother raised two sons who are the men's senior basketball coaches of Ateneo and FEU.

She must have told every market vendor there about them.

Early in life, I came to realize it as a fact—mothers do have high expectations of their children. That was a long time ago. My mother needed a kidney surgery.

I was still in school then. Young and full of braggadocio, I declared to my younger siblings, not to worry about the money, because I would take care of everything.

Those were tough words. "I would take care of everything." But they sounded stronger still in Pilipino. "*Ako ang bahala.*"

I have learned to be careful when I hear those words today.

* * *

HER firstborn son gave the promise she would have her kidney surgery. And to my mother, that was that, period. Her firstborn son has spoken.

Thank God, the small business deal I was running after then bombed out. I was going to broker a little deal on a few kilos of marijuana. It would have killed my mother.

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

You see, my father was a policeman. Not only that, he came from a family of policemen. He would have put me in jail himself.

I know now it would have broken my mother's heart, and I don't know how I can ever forgive myself for doing that.

* * *

BUT the real story is, my mother would not let the doctors touch her, until I showed up in the hospital to keep my promise. Such confidence in her son!

Luckily my father knew me well, and he did not believe me. Since I was missing in action, he arranged for some friends of his to do the surgery—free of charge.

I have yet to go to the good doctor, Benny Dungo, who was then a physician of PLDT, and kiss his feet 75 times for helping my mother. God bless his soul.

* * *

THIS is the woman who raised only nine children—and by herself, mind you. No *yaya*, no pedia, no disposable diapers.

I admit that, in this country, at least to certain people, nine children can be a bit disconcerting. But please try to understand the situation of my parents.

You see, my late father worked overseas for three years. When my mother had the kidney operation, she was still in her child-bearing age.

Easily, we could have been a dozen children.

But we have learned to accept the lousy cards that fate has dealt us. We are only nine children. And that's it. There will only be nine of us forever.

Ever the fighter in the family, my mother would not have any of it. She adopted two more boys, Kirok and Caloy, both of them street children, and forced them to go to school.

* * *

NOW we call our mother "Nanay," because, as the explanation goes, Nanay is simple folk, and we called our father "Dad," because Dad used to wear a mean moustache and spoke good English.

The term "dad" was more sophisticated, and "Tatay" would have been out of sync for my father. I think that's how it is with fathers. Image is always important.

Eventually, in such a conflict, the woman of the house should win. Simplicity wins over superficiality. In the end, to everybody, Dad also became known as Tatay.

And so today both of my kids call me "Tatay," because that is what I prefer. In that way, maybe I took after Nanay. Or she just had it her way a lot of times.

It's just that my little adorable Ariana, who happens to be living in Sweden, cannot pronounce her Filipino very well, and so to her I'm simply "Tutti." It sounds like chewing gum, but I love it.

* * *

AT one time or another, you try to figure out what you got from each of your parents. From Nanay I got the hyperbole.

I can use that particular figure of speech even in my sleep. I got it from Nanay. Sarcasm is not one of her specialties. I got sarcasm from just being a reporter, period.

Don't you come in and go out of the house too often, having to open the screen door one too many times, or you get Nanay's classic: You already allowed ten thousand homosexual mosquitoes to come in.

In my family, mosquitoes are related by blood to politicos. We hate them with a passion.

* * *

THE FOLLOWING description of her, as a matter of fact, is her own invention. Nanay will try to catch a peso bill even if it is flying in the middle of a super typhoon.

That's her motto in life, I guess. An honest peso is worth working for, no matter how hard.

I was 10 years old when Nanay and I would wake up at 4 a.m. to go to the fish market in Navotas just to whisper things in somebody's ear.

That used to be the style of wholesale bidding for fish in my time. Your bid is a secret. It's fair and simple. I cannot say the same thing for a lot of government deals.

Anyway, we would clean up the fish, put them in plastic, ice them in a styrofoam icebox, and sell them as processed fish in the offices in downtown Sta. Cruz in Manila.

That was her idea. A long time ago, Nanay thought of coming out with the first branded processed fish. Today they're all over the supermarkets.

I tell you this because today, thanks to her, I know food. I know how to buy fish. Or meat. Or fruits. I go to the market myself to buy my own fish.

I still cannot let anybody do it for me. For Nanay that's a mortal sin. You even have to go to confession.

* * *

NOWADAYS, Nanay is getting a bit sickly. She has diabetes. She also has heart trouble, and somebody big in San Miguel helped her to get medical attention.

Today Nanay is turning 75 years old. Maybe it's time I apologized to her, in public, for the times, when I was still a boy, I grumbled when she took me to the movies.

Dad would not allow her to watch movies by herself. I had to accompany her, as her close-in security.

But the plots of the movies were all the same. They were Tagalog movies, involving the love triangle of Marlene Dauden, Eddie Rodriguez and Lolita Rodriguez.

In my family, Nanay is sometimes known as Lolita.

I am not buttering up to my mother, but without meaning any insult to Ms Rodriguez, I think that Nanay, in her younger days, was more beautiful. She can also shed tears a lot faster.

Believe me, Nanay can be a little too dramatic at times. In that way, I confess, I probably took after her.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, February 7, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	16.75	16.75	84,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35	35	34.5	35	84,900
China Banking Corp.	635	635	635	635	400
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26	26	25.5	25.5	10,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30.5	30.5	30	30	23,900
Philippine National Bank	27	27.5	27	27.5	3,300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	27	26.5	27	200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	110,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1265	1265	1265	1265	70
Sun Life Financial Serv.	955	955	950	955	1,650
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	540,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	525	555	525	550	12,370
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.027	2,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	120,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	280	287.5	277.5	285	240,800
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	12,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	35,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.25	12.25	12	12	495,700
Petron Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.68	95,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	28,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.42	2.4	2.42	940,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	39,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17.25	17	17	349,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	56	55.5	56	107,800
San Miguel Corp. B	62	62	61	61.5	438,100
Universal Robina Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	14,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.3	1,076,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.32	1,493,000
Alo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	2,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.15	200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	2.1	1.9	2	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	90,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.135	0.145	2,180,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.8	8.8	8.6	8.7	85,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.58	0.59	1,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.155	310,000
Music Corp.	0.115	0.125	0.115	0.125	2,780,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	560,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	20,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	200,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	670,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.25	117,700
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	230,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	643,000
Jollibee Warrants	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	50,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10	10	10	10	1,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	470	470	470	470	350
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5	5	4.95	5	6,248,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	290,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	150,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.99	4,700,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	500,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.3	1,185,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	3,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	40,000
Omico Corp.	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	2,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	380,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	1,300,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	7,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	60,000

CURRENCIES

Feb. 7, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency In US$	Foreign currency In Peso
United States	Dollar	0.923361	1.000000	53.963000
Japan	Yen	0.007707	0.008347	0.450400
United Kingdom	Pound	1.512558	1.638100	88.396800
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118391	0.128217	6.919000
Switzerland	Franc	0.681950	0.738552	39.854500
Canada	Dollar	0.608917	0.659457	35.586300
Singapore	Dollar	0.530850	0.574911	31.023900
Australia	Dollar	0.545141	0.590388	31.859100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.449364	2.652661	143.145500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.246223	0.266660	14.389800
Brunei	Dollar	0.529329	0.573263	30.935000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021589	0.023381	1.261700
UAE	Dirham	0.251426	0.272294	14.693800
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.083000	58.441900
Argentina	Peso	0.294064	0.318471	17.185700
Brazil	Real	0.256703	0.278009	15.002200
Denmark	Kroner	0.134906	0.146103	7.884200
India	Rupee	0.019357	0.020964	1.131300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243022	0.263193	14.202700
Mexico	New Peso	0.084766	0.091802	4.953900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.506174	0.548186	29.581800
Norway	Kroner	0.133440	0.144515	7.798500
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015909	0.017229	0.929700
South Africa	Rand	0.111233	0.120465	6.500700
Korea	Won	0.000789	0.000855	0.046100
Sweden	Kroner	0.108925	0.117966	6.365800
Syria	Pound	0.017929	0.019417	1.047800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026609	0.028818	1.555100
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000481	0.000521	0.028100

Music eyes new strategy to keep afloat

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANKRUPT semiconductor firm Music Corp. is set to overhaul its business strategy in order to keep itself afloat amid the continuing downturn in the high-technology markets that it serves.

Music president and CEO Michael Burton announced during the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday that a new business plan, now in the pipeline, would not rely on the rebound in the semiconductor sector but instead focus on widening the market for its content addressable memory (CAM) product. CAM is a high-tech chip which accelerates processing functions in network systems.

The two main markets on which Music was earlier focused are the Internet and the telecommunication sectors.

"We are looking at a period of relatively flat industry growth for the next few years. The industry prognosis is that the rebound will not happen until 2006," Burton said.

The new business plan focuses on three main growth drivers:

- Marketing the CAM as a cost-competitive, single-chip solution for the low- to mid-density data networking market, not just the high-end segment;
- Development of new CAMs for the data networking market which expands the capability of the current product line without investing too much for research and development, and
- Identification of other non-data networking applications for CAMs and the development of interface products required to allow the CAM to link up to these applications.

DISCLOSURES

BENPRES Holdings Corp. will hold a special stockholders' meeting on March 13 at 9:30 a.m. at Studio 1, ABS-CBN Broadcast Center, Quezon City. Stockholders as of Feb. 19 are entitled to vote at the said meeting.

* * *

CHINA Banking Corp. approved the nomination of directors Joaquin Dee and Chia-Jang Liu as independent directors of the corporation.

* * *

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. confirmed that its profit had exceeded the P1.2-billion net income target for 2002. They will publish the exact amount as soon as they finish audit.

* * *

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. purchased 248,406 shares of ILIB at P1.90 per share on Feb. 6 pursuant to its share buyback program.

* * *

PRYCE Corp. disclosed a P1.6-billion revenue in 2002 which is 5.14 percent lower compared to the revenue in 2001.

* * *

BELLE Corp. announced the election of Gregorio U. Kilayko as director of the company to replace and serve out the unexpired term of Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. Kilayko was likewise elected as the independent director-chair of the corporation's audit committee.

Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

MITSUBISHI MOTORS PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

San Miguel seen posting strong 4th quarter profit

SAN MIGUEL Corp., Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage group, is likely to post solid profits in the fourth quarter to cap a decent 2002, and a restructured Coca-Cola bottling venture should add even more fizz this year.

"It is traditionally the strongest quarter for San Miguel because of consumer spending during the holiday season," said Mark Canizares, an analyst at Citisecurities Inc.

In the Philippines, San Miguel is synonymous with beer for its utter dominance of 90 percent of its home market, but the 113-year-old conglomerate also rules the roost in terms of liquor, soft drinks and processed meats.

Investors have cheered a 15-percent buy-in by Japan's Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd. and San Miguel's aggressive expansion plans in seven Asian countries. Its A shares leapt nearly 40 percent last year before easing in recent weeks.

But analysts cautioned against reading too much into the October to December numbers when San Miguel reports its 2002 results on Thursday, as its fourth-quarter profit usually reflects adjustments from previous quarters.

Restructuring costs from local acquisitions in 2001 pulled down the group's net income by 20 percent in the first half of last year versus a year earlier. The impact of integrating Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. is still a question mark.

"We are not sure how it would affect the company's bottom line and it could be recorded in the fourth quarter," Canizares said. "But we are optimistic of the domestic beer sales improvement in the fourth quarter." San Miguel has said it expects to meet its full-year net profit target of about P7 billion $130 million), with consolidated revenue likely to have risen 16 percent from 2001.

Analysts surveyed said they saw SMC's 2002 profit ranging from P6.5 billion to P7 billion versus P6.5 billion a year earlier.

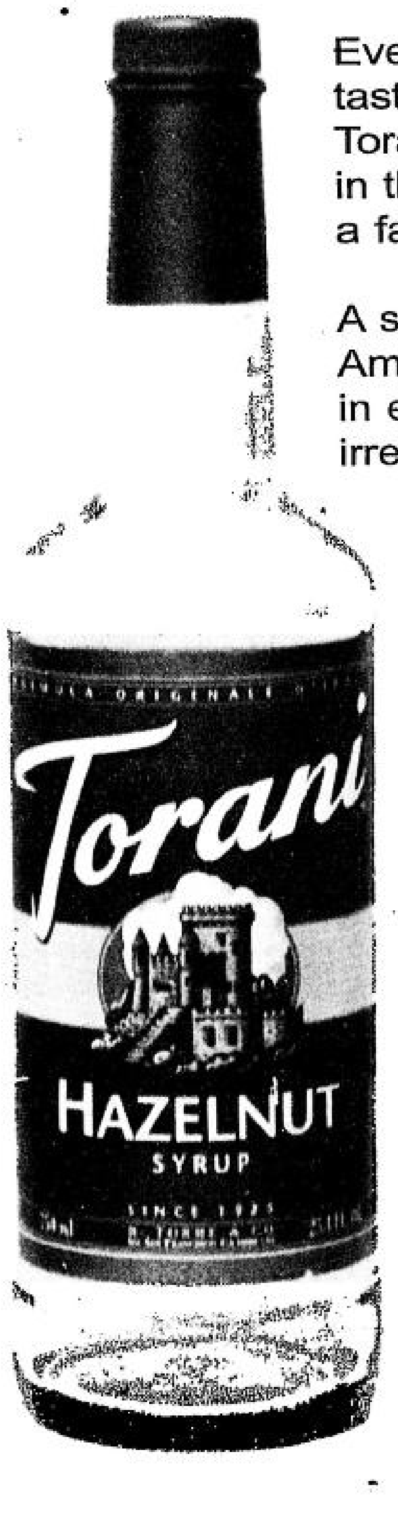
Multex Global Estimates has a consensus forecast of P6.76 billion in 2002, rising to P8.5 billion.

What is good for San Miguel is good for the Philippines.

The company's domestic and overseas sales are estimated to account for 3 to 4 percent of the country's gross national product and it contributes some 6 percent of total tax revenues.

Despite a looming war in Iraq that may dampen consumer spending, analysts said San Miguel's profits should jump by at least a fifth this year as it starts to reap gains from its 70-percent stake in Coco-Cola Bottlers Philippines. *Reuters*

Torani , the # 1 coffee flavoring in the U.S.* and now in the Philippines!



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AUDIT AWARD
San Miguel Corp. recently bagged the Most Outstanding Internal Audit Department Award 2002, the highest recognition given by the Institute of Internal Auditors-Philippines. SMC chief financial officer Ferdinand K. Constantino (with trophy) and vice president for San Miguel group audit Vicci M. Tomas (4th from right) received the honor from the Board of Reviewers consisting of Jaime Villegas of Ayala Corp. (back), Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Lilia Bautista (3rd from right) and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. chair Rizalino Navarro (2nd from right).

MBC, PAL tackle air access

PHILIPPINE Airlines and the Mindanao Business Council (MBC) have scheduled formal talks to forge a joint strategy for opening up the country's second largest island to more flights by foreign airlines.

Officials from both sides will sit down shortly to hammer out a joint action agenda that will push the so-called "pocket open skies" policy in Mindanao, primarily by convincing foreign carriers to exercise their unused right to fly to the island, said MBC chair Joji Ilagan-Bian.

The MBC, the umbrella organization of business chambers throughout the island, will take the lead in the campaign to prod foreign airlines to fly to Mindanao—an idea first proposed by PAL president Avelino L. Zapanta last Jan. 30 in Davao City.

In a speech during a meeting of the MBC, the PAL chief assured members of the group that the flag carrier would do all it could to promote Mindanao as an international destination, including lobbying with foreign airlines to start direct services.

Currently, 44 carriers have the right to operate passenger and cargo flights to four Mindanao points—Davao, General Santos City, Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga—but only Silk Air of Singapore takes advantage of this right with a twice-weekly service to Davao.

This has not sat well with local officials. "We need to find out why the other airlines are not using their landing rights. This despite the fact that a lot of routes are open and many areas in Mindanao are not served at all by foreign carriers," said Davao Councilor Mabel Laman.

Laman said she would introduce a motion in the city council expressing support for PAL's initiative to expand international air access to the island.

Bian also welcomed the flag carrier's efforts to encourage more competition from foreign airlines in the Mindanao market.

"The MBC has always been supportive of any policy that brings about competitiveness and reduces the cost of doing business in Mindanao," she said at the open forum following Zapanta's Jan. 30 presentation.

Transco to bid . . .

From page B12

transmission constraints in the province for the increasing power rates.

They said that power from Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo were not being allowed in the transmission system due to limited capacity of the lines which, in turn, result in higher costs because of minimum off-take provisions from the First Gas IPPs.

Transco officials said the timely completion of the transmission projects would ensure delivery of power to the grid at a time of an expected rise in demand.

The four transmission lines are expected to be completed by August 2004 while works on the substation would be finished by end-2005.

Government estimates show that Luzon needs 4,500 MW of additional generating capacity. If this is not met, power shortages are expected in the region by 2008.

Rate unbundling . . .

From page B12

base.

The quasi-judicial body said these policies would be used in deciding on other utilities' application for rate unbundling.

Ivanna dela Peña, Manila Electric Co.'s chief of utility economics, said the company was studying the decision and monitoring developments related to it.

Dela Peña noted that the ruling related to the rate base meant less basis for increasing the rates.

"It used to be that 60 days of purchased power was allowed as part of the rate base," she said.

But the ERC said this part of the rate base would vary for each utility.

In a separate interview, ERC acting chair Leticia Ibay said the Veco decision resulted in an overall rate reduction of 6.8 centavos per kilowatt hour.

"But the effect would be different for each class of customers," Ibay said.

For instance, most of Veco's customers—those using 150 kWh a month—would be paying 6 centavos more per kWh. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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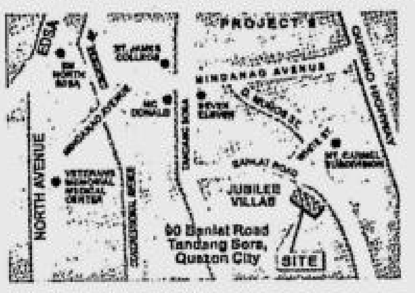

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
G/F MWSI Bldg., MWSS Complex
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines 1100
Tel. Nos. (632) 928-2303, 435-3366, 920-5521 loc. 3616

INVITATION TO BID

The Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (MWSI) is inviting all interested bidders to participate in the E-Bidding for the supply and delivery of ***Brass Ball/Straight Valve*** as shown below:

As per MWSI Technical Specifications and Terms and Conditions

No.	Qty.	Item/Description
1	27,900 pcs.	**Brass Ball/Straight Valve, 15mm valve size with provisions of locking, 20 mm inlet thread size x 20mm swivel nut outlet thread.**

Interested suppliers are required to submit the following as part of the pre-qualification/evaluation to the MWSI-Purchasing Department on or before February 21, 2003, 3:00 p.m.

1. At least three (3) samples (for testing)
2. Shop Drawing and brochures
3. Test Report of the following:
   a) Materials Analysis (Physical and Chemical Test)
   b) Hydro Test Report

A pre-Bid Conference will be held on **February 14, 2003, 10:00 a.m.** at the Conference Room of Corporate Logistics, Basement, MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City.

The complete bid documents can be secured at the Purchasing Department, Basement, Engineering Building upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos Only (P1,000.00) in the form of cash or Manager's Check payable to Maynilad Water Services, Inc.

E-Bid Schedule will be on March 05, 2003 (Wednesday) 2:00 p.m.

MWSI reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any and all informalities therein, and accept the bid it deems most advantageous to the company.

(Sgd.) IGNACIO B. GIMENEZ
SAVP, Corporate Logistics

(PDI–Feb. 8 & 9, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources
REGIONAL OFFICE NO. 4-B
1st Floor, ICC Building, NIA Complex
EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. 928-2051/929-6071 loc. 174

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Regional Office No. IV-B invites Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to prequalify and bid for services to implement community-organizing work in the following bays under the Income Diversification Component of the Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP).

BAY	PROVINCE	MUNICIPALITY
Puerto Princesa Bay	Palawan	Puerto Princesa City

NGOs that are to be considered for the pre-qualification preferably should have at least five (5) years relevant experience on community organizing for livelihood development and coastal resource management in the provinces and areas mentioned above.

The general scope of work involves organization work to establish community-based organizations; continuing assistance to the community organizations to build up membership and develop leadership and capability in undertaking coastal resource management and micro-enterprise activities; and assistance in FRMP implementation at the local levels.

Among the specific activities to be undertaken by the selected NGO includes:

1. Strengthening of the fisherfolk associations and other self-help groups in the coastal communities to engage in income diversification and micro enterprise activities;
2. Initiation of primary cooperatives to essentially become multi-purpose cooperatives, giving more attention to complementation of water-based and land-based activities.
3. Assist BFAR in the conduct of education and training that is focused in mobilizing the organizational capability of their cooperatives to access external opportunities and potentials towards empowerment;
4. Assist BFAR in the conduct of LGU planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of various CRM concepts and best practices; and; institutionalization of such in the local development plans; and
5. Continue unfinished scope of work by the previous contracted NGO in the said Bay.

Interested NGOs must submit notarized pre-qualification statements together with the required documents to the BFAR Regional Office IV-B which have jurisdiction over the areas where they are interested in working. Documents must be properly "tabbed" to correspond with each pre-qualification requirement and should be received not later than 5:00 PM on February 28, 2003. Attention: The Chairpeson, Prequalification, Evaluation and Awards Committee. Forms for prequalification and list of required documents may be obtained from the BFAR Regional Office No. IV-B.

OIC-REGIONAL DIRECTOR VIRGILIO A. ALFORQUE
ADDRESS: 1st Flr., ICC Bldg., NIA Road, NIA Compound, EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City
CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS: 928-2015 (Telefax); 9296071 to 79 local 174.

BFAR Regional Office IV-B reserves the right to reject any or all bids as well as to waive any defect or informality in the submitted bid documents. It also reserves the prerogative to accept any bid it may consider as most responsive and advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) VIRGILIO A. ALFORQUE
OIC-Regional Director

(PDI – Feb. 8 & 15, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
National Meat Inspection Commission (NMIC)
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

The **NATIONAL MEAT INSPECTION COMMISSION (NMIC)** would like to invite interested suppliers with branches and/or service centers nationwide, duly accredited by this agency, to bid for **twenty six (26) units personal computers**, with the following specifications:

P4 processor, 2.0 GHz; 128 MB DDRAM Memory; P4 Motherboard with built-in audio & video card; 56 k Internal Modem; 40 GB HDD (5400 RPM); 52x CD-ROM drive; 1.44 MB FDD; PS/2 Keyboard & Mouse; P4 Medium Tower ATX casing; Pair of amplified speaker; 15" CRT monitor; 500w AVR; 500wUPS

Non-accredited suppliers may still participate, provided the required accreditation documents are submitted on/or before **February 14, 2003 at 5:00 p.m.**

Accreditation forms may be secured from **MR. ISABELO C. RODRIGUEZ,** Property Officer at the telephone numbers and address stated below.

Pre-bidding conference shall be held **February 21, 2003, 10:00 a.m.** at NMIC Central Office Conference Room. Deadline for submission of bid documents shall be on **February 24, 2003, 10:00 a.m.** at which time and date bids shall be opened at NMIC Central Office Conference Room. Bidders are required to post a 5% bond of the total bid price.

All interested parties may submit bid documents to:

THE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
National Meat Inspection Commission
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 921-4473 & 924-3119 • Telefax No. 924-7973

The NMIC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any formalities therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) DR. MINDA S. MANANTAN
Chairperson, NMIC-BAC

(PDI-Feb. 8, 9 & 10, 2003)

Republika ng Pilipinas
KAGAWARAN NG PAGSASAKA
PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN SA NUTRISYON
(NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL)
Villamor Interchange South Superhighway
Makati City, Philippines

NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL

Announcement of Vacant Positions

NUTRITION OFFICER III (NSD-CO) - SG-18; Item No. NNCB-NUTO3-14-1998; Bachelor's degree relevant to job; 2 years relevant experience; 8 hours relevant training; 2nd level eligibility.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT II (OED-CO) - SG-17; Item No. NNCB-EXA2-I-1998; Bachelor's degree; 1 year experience; 4 hours training; 2nd level eligibility.

CLERK II (AD-CO) - SG-4; Item No. NNCB-CK2-2-1998; 2 years college studies; no experience required; no training required; 1st level eligibility.

DRIVER I (CAR) - SG-3; Item No. NNCB -DRVI-10-1998; Elementary School Graduate; With valid professional driver's license; 1 year experience.

For further information, please contact Mr. Benjamin C. Formento, Human Resource Management Officer III, Personnel Section, Administrative Division, Tel. No. 892-85-75.

CAROLINA BAUTISTA-BATALLONES
Deputy Executive Director

(PDI--Feb. 8, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC), pursuant to the mandate of Republic Act Nos. 8189 and 8436, invites interested offerors, vendors, suppliers or lessors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement by purchase, lease, lease with option to purchase, or otherwise, supplies, equipment, materials and services needed for a comprehensive Automated Election System, consisting of three (3) phases: (a) registration/verification of voters, (b) automated counting and consolidation of votes, and (c) electronic transmission of election results, with an approved budget of TWO BILLION FIVE HUNDRED MILLION (Php 2,500,000,000) Pesos.

Only bids from the following entities shall be entertained:

a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/proprietorships;
b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., a group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract, provided that Filipino ownership thereof shall be at least sixty percent (60%); and
e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority.

Bid documents for the three (3) phases may be obtained starting 10 February 2003, during office hours from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat/ Office of Commissioner Resurreccion Z. Borra, 7th Floor Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila, upon payment at the Cash Division, Commission on Elections, in cash or cashier's check, payable to the Commission on Elections, of a non-refundable amount of FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 15,000.00) for each phase. For this purpose, interested offerors, vendors, suppliers or lessors have the option to participate in any or all of the three (3) phases of the comprehensive Automated Election System.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on 13 February 2003, at 9:00 a.m. at the Session Hall, Commission on Elections, Postigo Street, Intramuros, Manila. Should there be questions on the bid documents, bidders are required to submit their queries in writing to the BAC Secretariat prior to the scheduled Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission to the BAC of applications for eligibility and bid envelopes for the supply of the comprehensive Automated Election System shall be at the Session Hall, Commission on Elections, Postigo Street, Intramuros, Manila on 28 February 2003 at 9:00 a.m.

The COMELEC reserves the right to review the qualifications of the bidders after the bidding and before the contract is executed. Should such review uncover any misrepresentation made in the eligibility statements, or any changes in the situation of the bidder to materially downgrade and substance of such statements, the COMELEC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice without any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by it in the preparation of its bid.

28 January 2003.

(Sgd.) **RALPH C. LANTION**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Feb. 1 & 8, 2003)

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Building I, Energy Center, Merritt Road,
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Nos. 893-6001 to 47 local 2101-2104
Direct Line: 840-2024 / Fax No.: (632) 840-1459

PNOC
The Energy Company

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY, PREQUALIFICATION AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility/prequalification and to submit sealed bids for the **ON-CALL LIGHTERAGE SERVICES (CM03-1202).**

The approved budget for this contract is **Php 181,270,000.00**.

Only contractors who will comply with PNOC EC's eligibility and prequalification requirements shall be allowed to participate in the public bidding.

Prequalification and Tender Documents shall be available for issuance at the above address from the Operations Services Group (c/o Mr. George N. Alejandro and Mr. Emmanuelito A. Ababol) from **February 10 to 18, 2003,** upon presentation of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: Five Hundred (PHP 500.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **February 21, 2003, 2:00 PM at the PNOC-EC Conference Room, Bldg. 1 of the above address.**

The public bidding shall incorporate the electronic bid submission, using the ITBF system. Deadline for submission of Eligibility Requirements, Bid and Tender Documents will be set during the Pre-Bidding Conference.

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, or to accept such bids or to award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PNOC EC.

This publication is also posted at DBM Website: www.procurementservices.net.

(Sgd.) **RUFINO B. BOMASANG**
President and CEO

(PDI - Feb 8. 2003)

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Emily Gosiengfiao DeJesus

A BEAUTIFUL WIFE AND A DEDICATED MOTHER

Emily was a true fighter.

She never gave up easily on anything she had a passion for – building a promising future for her children, loving a devoted husband, and living a happy life with family and friends.

Feared by bullies as a toughie in grade school and later addressed as "Madame" by workers in her construction business, Emily commanded respect with a firm and fair hand. She never let anything get her down, not even her last years confined to a wheelchair. She told her grandchildren that she was the "cool Grandma on wheels."

Emily Gosiengfiao DeJesus, 51, battled spinal cord cancer for three years. She died peacefully at her Westampton, NJ home on February 4 (EST), with her husband **Joe** and her sister **Bettie** at her bedside.

In the mid eighties, she and her family moved from the Philippines to the United States. There she put all three of her children through good universities and inspired in them her passion for food, music, and the arts. Emily's spirit lives on in her kids: eldest daughter, **Alessandra (Ginger),** married to **Shane Mueller,** with grandchildren **Veronica** and **Ethan;** son **Vasco (Bumper),** and long term girlfriend **Carrie Scattergood;** and youngest daughter, **Angel,** married to **Nathan Dougherty,** with grandchild **Victoria**.

Prior to her illness, Emily was the assistant to the director of investment banking in Janney Montgomery Scott, a major investment company based in Philadelphia – the city that had aroused her curiosity ever since she was little girl living in Manila.

A memorial service in Sacred Heart Church in Mount Holly, NJ will be announced soon.

JUSTINO Z. BENITO, SR.

Former Congressman, 6th (5th) Dist., Pangasinan

Now peacefully rests in the Grace and Goodness of our Lord on February 5, 2003 at the age of 89.

His loving family, relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Nacional Memorial Homes, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 9, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

"My soul finds rest in God alone: my salvation comes from Him,
He alone is my rock and my salvation: He is my fortress;
I will never be shaken." — Psalm 62:1

VICTORINO NOCUM LAZARO, SR.

Of Talavera, Nueva Ecija

Asst. Regional Director
National Food Authority
Peacefully joined his Creator on February 6, 2003
at the age of 49.

His beloved wife **JULIE** (†); children **ANNIE & GELO PORTILLO; MARGIE & TONY LEACHON; GIGI; SUSIE & BERNARD VICTORINO; POPO & ANN LAZARO;** grandchildren **SAM & OWIE L. PORTILLO; MIKAN, VANA, & JOLO L. LEACHON, PATTY L. VICTORINO;** sisters & brother **NIEVES, LUCILA** (†), **AURORA, EMILIA, PABLO,** relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Wednesday, February 12, 2003 at the La Funeraria Paz Crematory, Araneta Ave., Quezon City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

"Cast your care upon the Lord who will give you support. God will never allow the righteous to stumble."
Psalm 55:23

LORENZO MONTESINAY FRANTILLA, SR.

August 17, 1949 - February 3, 2003

President, Southern Iloilo Telephone Company
(SITELCO)
President, Rotary Club of Miag-ao, Iloilo

His loving wife **Linda Firmeza Frantilla**; children & daughters-in-law **Lelord** & Grace Yulo, **Christopher** & Sarah Campos, **Lorelyn, Lorenzo, Jr.** & Consuelo Espino; grandchildren Chris Gerard & Frances Loren; sisters Melchora F. Nabo, Teresita F. Villavicencio & Carmen F. Monsale; in-laws, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of Insong's soul.

Interment at the Miag-ao Catholic Cemetery will be on February 15, 2003 (Saturday) after the 1:30 p.m. Holy Mass.

Please omit flowers. Donations for the Rotary Club Project of Miag-ao will be appreciated.

GRACE LOTILLA ROSALES

February 11, 1932 — February 7, 2003
Peacefully joined her Creator
on February 7, 2003 at the age of 70.

Her children **Dr. Raymond Rosales** and **Martina Milagros Rosales, Suzette Rosales-Cody** and **Jay Cody, Dr. Vincent Paul Rosales** and **Leila Ruby Rosales;** grandchildren **Andrew Ray Rosales, Matthew Ray Rosales, Mary Camille Rosales, Melissa Marie Rosales, Diwa Elizabeth Cody** and **Margaret Cody,** relatives and friends, request prayers for the repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Funeraria Paz. Interment will be held on February 9, 2003 at Himlayang Pilipino in Quezon City.

Our Dearly Beloved

RUDY "JACK" CONCEPCION

of 19-b Violeta St., Nepo Subdivision, Angeles City
peacefully joined our Lord on Feb. 03, 2003 at the age of 63.

His loving wife Fe; children Cecille, Tetet, Melite, Carina, Lotlot, Mandy and Litz; together with son-in-law Guy and granddaughter Sam, his mother, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Angelina Chapels, Sto. Rosario St., Angeles City. Mass will be held on February 8, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. at the Holy Rosary Parish Church.

Interment will follow at the Holy Mary Memorial Park, Angeles City.

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INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
ANACORITA C. DADULLA	Feb. 8	12:30 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	St. Peter Quezon Avenue
MYRNA ACOSTA KIKUCHI	Feb. 9	10:00 AM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	#90 San Agustin St., Palatiw Pasig City
TIMOTEO R. DIESTRO, SR.	Feb. 9	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	#47 Espiritu Compd., Taytay, Rizal
PETRONILO J. LACHICA	Feb. 9	12:30 PM	Holy Gardens Greenhills Memorial Park Calamba City	#25 Carmel Housing Canlubang, Laguna

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Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
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Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9978
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu;
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People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Metrobank launches flexible-rate $ time deposit

NOW, there is a time deposit product in the market that guarantees high returns in US dollars.

Metrobank, the country's largest bank, recently launched MetroDollar Flexi-Rate TD, a time deposit product that, compared to traditional time deposit products, offers higher returns on your greenbacks at the end of two years.

MetroDollar Flexi-Rate TD offers a guaranteed minimum interest rate of 3 percent gross per annum and 3.5 percent gross per annum on the first and second year respectively, or a rate based on the 3-month USD Libor plus 1 percent, whichever is higher. Interest is reset and payable quarterly and proceeds are automatically credited to the clients designated deposit account.

With this unique, highly yielding deposit product, clients are able to enjoy competitive interest rates over regular TD. At the same time, they have the chance to earn higher interest if Libor rates go up. On the other hand, should Libor rates decline, the client is assured that they will earn nothing lower than the minimum guaranteed rate of 3 percent for the first year and 3.5 percent for the second year.

MetroDollar Flexi-Rate TD is offered for a limited time only. Minimum placement is US$50,000.00. For more information, log on to www.metrobank.com.ph or call any of the following product specialists: Isabel I. Benitez at 898-8702; Mawin T. Batan at 898-8701; or Vin Magistrado at 898-9873.

ABS-CBN INKS MOU WITH CCTV

ABS-CBN and CCTV, two of Asia's top television networks, recently renewed ties and agreed to encourage the promotion of their respective broadcast industries. The delegation of the China Central TV (CCTV), the national TV network of the People's Republic of China, was headed by its vice minister and president, Mr. ZhAO Huayong. ABS-CBN executives hosted a dinner reception for the Chinese delegation that also included PROC ambassador to the Philippines Wang Chungui. ABS-CBN and CCTV executives signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that aims to further strengthen the good relationships between the people of PROC and the Philippines through the assistance of the two networks in promoting each other's respective television industry and cultural heritage, and the commitment of undertaking co-production ventures. Signing the MOU are from left: PROC ambassador Wang Chungui, CCTV president ZhAO Huayong, ABS-CBN president and COO Federico M. Garcia and ABS-CBN chair and CEO Eugenio Lopez III.

Assumption/Don Bosco joint reunion

BATCH 65 alumni of Assumption Academy of Pampanga and Don Bosco Academy will hold a joint reunion on Feb. 16 at Greenfields Country Club in Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga. Topbilled "Chill Out 2003", the reunion is a sequel to the group's successful "An Affair to Remember" get-together in 1999. Several alumni residing in the United States, Canada and Europe will converge in Pampanga to join the locally based alumni.

A whole week of fun activities awaits the alumni of both schools. Registration on Feb. 16 starts at 9:30 a.m. The rest of the week will be highlighted by out-of-town "chill out parties and excursions to Tagaytay Highlands, Punta Fuego and Baguio.

For reservations, call Edna Buenviaje-Cruz at 0917-5302734 or Nancy Ladringan-Harel at 636-0255 to 58 for Manila residents, and Mely Santos-Roque at 0918-9038838 for Pampanga residents.

GM gives free plate artwork to its customers

IN THE spirit of goodwill, General Motors Automobiles Philippines, the local subsidiary of the world's number one car manufacturer, is helping raise funds for Montessori de Oro.

Located in Cagayan de Oro, Montessori de Oro started as a preparatory school in 1980 before offering its educational programs to high school students. To maintain its quality education for the benefit of its students, the school embarked on a fund raising campaign called "Your Future, Our Pride" through the sale of Norma Belleza's plate artwork.

GMPh supports this endeavor by buying most of the 1,500-piece stock and gives them as gifts to its loyal customers for every purchase of any GM car starting last December.

"This project is two-pronged. We are not only ensuring the educational future of Montessori de Oro students, but we are also supporting up-and-coming artists like Norma Belleza, who embodies the simplicity of Filipino life through her artworks," said Toti Zara, GMPh sales director.

With its determined and colorful brushstrokes, Belleza's plates will truly bring warmth to the Filipino home. The "Ilaw ng Tahanan 2002" plates will be offered for free until stocks lasts at any GM AutoWorld outlets in Makati, Quezon Avenue, Shaw Boulevard, Cebu and Pampanga.

Las Piñas hosts writers' conference

THE DIVISION of City Schools Las Piñas hosted the 23rd Metro Manila Young Writers' Conference and Contest held at Las Piñas East National High School, Verdant Acres, Las Piñas City last Dec. 5 (opening ceremonies) and Dec. 13 (awarding ceremonies) respectively, through the leadership of City Schools Division superintendent Dr. Virginia L. Peñafuerte and assistant Schools Division superintendent Dr. Lourdes M. Victoriano and the assistance of all DepEd NCR officials and Las Piñas school administrators, teaching and non-teaching personnel.

Mayor Vergel 'Nene' A. Aguilar of Las Piñas City, City of love and progress, welcomed the participants and Congresswoman Cynthia A. Villar, better half of Senator Manuel B. Villar Jr. delivered an inspirational message.

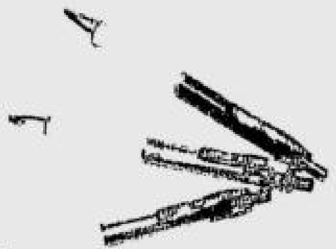
Said conference and contest was participated in by 1176 pupil-journalists and 500 school paper advisers from the 14 divisions of the DepEd-National Capital Region, with the theme: Expanding the Reach of Campus Journalism through Information Technology (English)/ Pagpapalawak ng Saklaw ng Pampaaralang Pamamahayag sa Pamamagitan ng Teknolohiyang Pang-impormasyon at Komunikasyon (Filipino).

Participating pupil-journalist competed and expressed themselves in Filipino and in English under six categories such as: news writing, feature writing, editorial writing and cartooning, sports writing, copyreading and headlining, and photojournalism.

The first five winners per category will be chosen to represent the region to the national level contest, which will be held at Lapulapu City, Cebu on Feb 13.

Product FILES

Lotus Retractogel enters the scene



IN LINE with its commitment of producing top of the line quality writing instruments, Lotus presents its Lotus Retractogel. A retractable gel pen with numerous features, this gel pen boasts of superior materials, including a German-made gel ink specifically designed for tropical climates, cool barrel shades matching its ink colors, a rubberized grip for additional writing comfort, 0,5mm tungsten carbide tip for an even, smooth ink flow for writing, a wax seal in the tip specifically designed to prevent ink flow when ballpen is not in use, and a durable retracting mechanism. Available in black, red, and blue colors, the best part about this gel pens are their very affordable price. Lotus, the brand of ultimate writing instruments, is owned by Amalgamated Specialties Corporation Corporation (Amspec).

FUNDADOR RECEIVES AWARD

Allied Domecq's Fundador was cited by the National Consumers Affairs Foundation as the top liquor brand of 2002 at the 19th Year-Ender Excellence Awards held recently at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. Fundador's legacy dates back to 1874 when Spanish wine maker Pedro Domecq introduced the first aged Brandy de Jerez for commercial trade. In the Philippines, Fundador has been in the market for 100 years and remains to be the number one Spanish brandy. Shown in the above photograph are (from left) NCAF officials Jake Navea and Lolita Mirpuri, Fundador brand manager Eric Khan and guest Governor Justo Ortiz.

TOP UNIFORM MANUFACTURERS MEET

An organization of RP's top uniform manufacturers, Unimoda (Uniform Manufacturers Organization and Design Association) recently met to firm up their commitment to the development of local uniform industry as a competitive world-class leader. To prepare for global competitiveness, they have also forged a linkage with the major textile mills and prominent Filipino fashion designers to expand their market strength to global economies. Their present impressive client list consists of the Philippine banks, government institutions and the top 1000 corporations. In photo are (front row, from left): Randal Solomon, Armin Demetillo and Edric Ang. (Second row, from left) Lilibeth Chua (treasurer), Remy Lagdameo, Analyn Centeno, Chona Bello, Nilda Edquilang (secretary). (Back row, from left) Bing Olivar (PRO), Bon Gavino Gautier (chair), Marita de Guzman, Vilma Litam (vice president), Olive Ang (president), Faith Lao, Delia Litonjua, Merci Pabicon.

GET ACTIVE WITH BARBIE

Get going with Barbie's latest active wear and playwear collections from Tropic Isles Collection. Hang out with your friends in these playful brights that pep up that classic look. It's cool and fun with the Barbie Playwear Collection. Get ready, get set, and get going with the Barbie Sportswear Collection. Go get that Barbie brand twist with patterns that explode with every color. Mix n' match with Barbie's coolest and trendiest accessories. Barbie licensed apparel and accessories are now available in all leading toy stores and department stores nationwide. Exclusively distributed by Richwell Trading Corporation, #25 Quezon Ave., QC.

Safeguard's germ-busting heroes to spread fun in Cebu City

AFTER their successful hygiene awareness tours in the Queen City of the South, Captain Safeguard and the Germ Patrol will celebrate the much-awaited Germs Away Day at SM City Cebu on Feb. 9.

The Germs Away Day is a culmination of Captain Safeguard's school and barangay tours in the city as part of their mission to teach proper hygiene habits among schoolchildren and mothers. Proper hand washing for at least 30 seconds and daily bathing are the cornerstones of preventing the spread of unseen germs that cause diarrhea, cold, flu and gastrointestinal infections. Having clean hands and body promote healthy well being that consequently contributes to productivity of both children and mothers.

The Germs Away Day is a daylong fun-way of learning good health habits that features carnival characters like a ringmaster, jugglers and balloon-sculptors. Various games and booths such as hit-the-germs booth, the one-on-one basketball shootout, the catch the king dumi-dumi, going to school relay, bubble show, and many others will be showcased. A raffle draw will also be a part of the event.

Germs Away Day also caps off the Safeguard Healthy Home Interschool contest where 15 winners will receive cash prizes. More than hundred entries, which are works of art, will be displayed at the affair for everyone to admire.

Everyone is invited to join in the festivities. Simply bring an empty Safeguard carton to enter and be part of the celebration. Also catch the Germs Away Day in other areas on the following dates: SM CDO, Cagayan de Oro City on Feb. 16; and Gaisano Mall, Davao City on Feb. 23.

BITS & Clips

UPS sponsors hot air balloon show

AFTER posting strong volume growth in 2002, United Parcel Service's Philippine operation is setting another milestone with the sponsorship of the 8th Philippine International Hot Air Balloon Fiesta in Clark Airbase, Pampanga. As the event's official transporter, UPS flew in hot air ballooning equipment from all over the world so that enthusiasts could take part in this once-a-year event. The aviation show, which is being held from the Feb. 7 to 9, is being billed as the comeback performance of what was once a top-billed annual event of the Department of Tourism (DOT). The event is organized by the Hot Air Balloon Club of the Philippines. Some 15 hot air balloons are flying in. The show also features paragliding, racketeering and aerial aerobatics. The event will feature some 100 demonstration aircraft from various countries.

Cuban ambassador speaks on revolution

UNIVERSITY of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo is inviting the public to a forum on the Cuban revolution titled "Cuba Today: Profiles of a Revolution" on Feb. 11, 9-12 a.m., at the Faculty Center Conference Hall in UP Diliman. The forum is in commemoration of the 44th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution on Jan. 1. Speakers at the forum are Cuban Ambassador to the Philippines Ramon Alonso Medina and Ana Maria Nemenzo, who visited Havana last July and will share her observations on Cuba.

'Latin Passion' at its finest

GINA Aguilar, ballroom director of Hong Kong Golden Pavilion located at the Heritage Hotel, Pasay City, announces the first-ever produced ballroom show/dinner titled "Latin Passion" on Feb. 10. Edna Ledesma, one of the country's Latin American ballroom dancing champions, and Ogie Mendoza, Asia's Tango master, are the featured performers for the night. Salsa Manila, Philippine representative to the 1st International Hong Kong Salsa Congress and the Japan Salsa Congress, render special performances. Proceeds of the event will be donated to the Fr. AG Cogliandro Memorial Foundation Inc., which grants scholarships to seminarians. Event sponsors are Intermed, makers of Cherifer Premium, Konica, and RJ 100.3.

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS

FFCCII says unstable peso turns off foreign investors

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FOREIGN investors will continue to ignore the Philippines unless the peso achieves long-term stability, according to the influential Federation of Filipino Chinese-Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc.

FFCCCII president John K.C. Ng said the volatile peso made it unpalatable for foreign investors to sink their money into the country because any profit they would make in the Philippines would only be eaten up by the depreciation in the peso.

"Foreign investors feel that if they invest $1 today, they would still get $1 after five years even if the peso profits double during the period," Ng said. He blamed the government's failure to maintain a stable currency as for the sharp decline in foreign investments here in recent years.

This is why Ng expects local investors and not foreign investors to carry the load in steering the country back towards recovery.

"We think 2003 will be a turnaround year for the economy," Ng said.

Ng urged the government to concentrate on helping investors that were already here to survive by addressing their concerns on surging imports, rising power costs, poor infrastructure, and breakdown in the peace and order.

NG

But he said the government officials' fixation with politics has delayed the formulation and implementation of "fixes" to solve the problems of local industries.

FFCCCI trade and industry committee chair Richard Tiu said that a lingering concern of their members was the breakdown in peace and order which has prompted most of their members to spend more for their security and spend less outside the safety of their homes.

Tiu said the threat of kidnappings have spurred some Filipinos to go overseas. "They do not want their children to grow up with bodyguards shadowing them everywhere.," Tiu said.

Transco to bid out 7 transmission projects

By Ronnel W. Domingo

POWER plants in Batangas could expect relief from constraints in transmitting the electricity they produce as the National Transmission announced it would push through this year seven projects for the reinforcement of the system in the province.

Transco documents showed that auctions would be held this year for the construction of four 230-kilovolt transmission lines and major works on three substations.

The Batangas transmission reinforcement projects kicked off last Jan. 23 with a tender for putting up a line connecting the San Lorenzo switchyard to the Batangas substation.

The other three lines will connect the Batangas substation to the Makban "A" switchyard, the switchyard to the Calamba Tower No. 50, the tower for the Biñan substation.

Also, the existing Batangas substation will be dismantled and replaced.

Major upgrades would be done in the Makban A switchyard and Biñan substations.

There were no available figures on the cost of the projects, but Transco officials said that these would enable the Luzon power grid's transmission system to accommodate the generation capacity additions from different independent power producers (IPPs).

The three new natural gas-fired plants started commercial operations in 2002 and 2003, two of which are affiliate suppliers of distribution giant Manila Electric Co.

These are First Gas Power Corp.'s 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita and the 500-MW San Lorenzo plants. The third is the 1,200-MW Ilijan plant, which is run by a Korean Power-led consortium.

Meralco officials blamed the

TRANSCO/ B6

Rate unbundling to result in power cost reduction

ELECTRICITY distributors may see rate reductions arising from the upcoming decisions of the Energy Regulatory Commission on rate unbundling applications following its favorable decision on Visayan Electric Co.'s (Veco) petition, an industry source said.

The source, who is familiar with the matter, said in an interview that the Jan. 29 decision involved factors that tend to decrease the amount of possible rate hikes if any.

This included diminished working capital requirement, exclusion of income tax from operating expense and retaining the systems loss recovery cap.

In a statement, the ERC said it also used the following policies in coming up with the Veco decision:

- maintaining the systems loss cap at 9.5 percent of electricity bought from producers (Veco's propose to use its actual loss of 10.5 percent);
- allowing two months cash operating and maintenance expenses and seven days worth of purchased power as part of the rate

RATE/ B6

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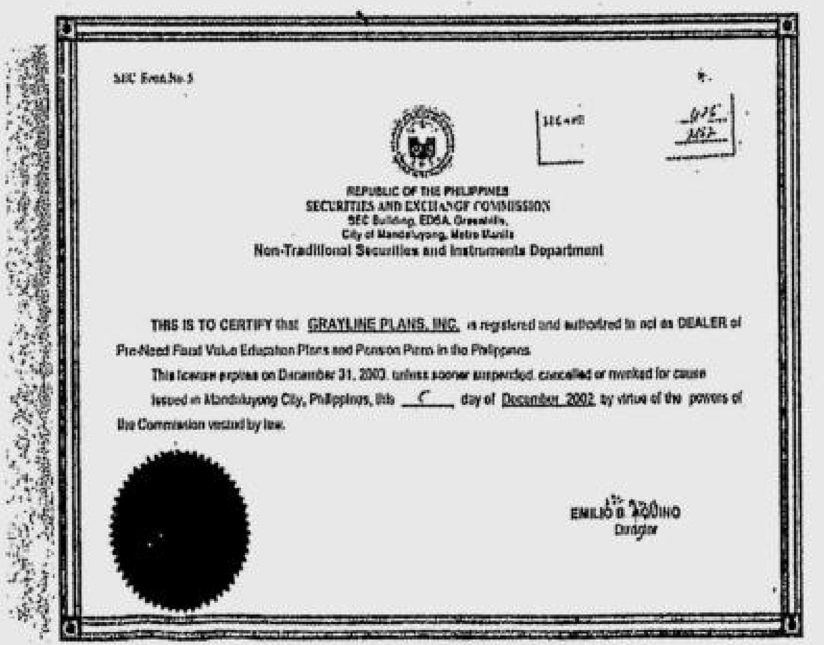
2003 DEALERSHIP LICENSE

The Securities and Exchange Commission recently issued to Grayline Plans, Inc. its Dealership License for Fiscal Year 2003. This action made by the SEC is proof of the soundness and stability of Grayline Plans, Inc.

Grayline Plans, Inc. was incorporated in 1995 and has already achieved a creditable standing in the pre-need industry. To date, GPI is one of only a few pre-need companies that have been able to comply with the stringent requirements of SEC for renewal of a dealership license.

In 2002, SEC issued several new rulings intended to protect the interests of the industry's clientele. This development has placed every pre-need company under pressure to fully comply with the new regulations when applying for dealership licenses for 2003. One of the more significant ruling for a pre-need company to be granted a dealership license for 2003 is that its capitalization should be at least P75 Million (for two plans) and P100 Million (for three Plans), and there should be no deficiency in its trust fund.
Grayline Plans, Inc. has complied with these conditions.

GPI has organized a more productive field sales force and is poised to fully achieve its goals in 2003. While it was founded primarily to service the requirements of the institutional, and the C and D markets, GPI is now visible in the corporate and high-end markets as well. GPI continues in its never-ending quest for excellence, not only in products and compensation, but also in the quality of service. Under the able leadership of its management officers, GPI is well on its way to success.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills,
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila
Non-Traditional Securities and Instruments Department

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that GRAYLINE PLANS, INC. is registered and authorized to act as DEALER of Pre-Need Fixed Value Education Plans and Pension Plans in the Philippines.

This license expires on December 31, 2003, unless sooner suspended, cancelled or revoked for cause.

Issued in Mandaluyong City, Philippines, this 5 day of December 2002 by virtue of the powers of the Commission vested by law.

EMILIO B. AQUINO
Director

The Securities and Exchange Commission has not approved this advertisement or determined if this is accurate or complete. Any representation to the contrary constitutes a violation of the Securities Regulation Code and is criminally punishable. The public is encouraged to report immediately to the Securities and Exchange Commission any misrepresentation or false or inaccurate statement.

EDUCATION
MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM

Courses for Education Leaders and Learning Managers

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

■ Finance Management for Education Leaders (February 17-19, 2003)
This course is offered to CEO's finance and accounting executives and administrators of both public and private schools. Based on the premise that financial planning must be consistent with the strategic plan of the organization, this course will provide the participants the following:
1. Frameworks and processes for a comprehensive understanding of a school's financial system;
2. Tools and techniques on financial and economic analysis, planning and control and projections of the financial operations (expenditures and revenues) of an educational institution

■ Instructional Design (Blended Technology: Hands-On and On-line) (March 10-12, 2003)
This course is open to teachers, supervisors, academic coordinators and subject area heads. Utilizing blended learning and hands-on applications, it aims to.
1. Provide an overview of Instructional System Design (ISD) and comparative discussion on several ISD models;
2. Guide participants through the development of content and appropriate media selection;
3. Equip participants with skills and appreciation of the process and value of formative and summative evaluation;
4. Coach the participants through the development of an actual ID project

■ Strategic Positioning for Education Leaders (SPEL) April 21-25, 2003
This course is offered to the top executives, managers and administrators of both public and private educational institutions.

■ Transformational Processes for Learning Managers (TPLM) May 12-16, 2003
This course is open to teachers, supervisors, academic coordinators, subject area heads and faculty development coordinators.

For further details contact:
Yam dela Cruz
Tel. no.: (632) 892-4011 to 25 loc. 371
Telefax: (632) 892-1724 / 893-2146

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ASIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM FACULTY

Prof. Eduardo A. Morató, Jr., Dean of the Washington SyCip Graduate School of Business. Dean Morató holds the Gaston Z. Ortigas, Sr. Chair in Development Management and has been on the AIM faculty since 1975. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Center for Development Management and the Asian Center for Entrepreneurship. Dean Morató has authored books, occasional papers, monographs and journal articles on business and development management. He was involved in the drafting of the DECS Revised Master Plan based on the Strategic Planning Workshop which he facilitated. He was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Assumption College.

Prof. Milagros Du-Lagrosa, Program Director, is a creative educator and specialist in human development and learning methodologies. She has dedicated 26 years of her professional life teaching learners at different developmental levels in the subject areas of Biology, Theology, Mathematics, and Psychology. She was supervising teacher of Biological Science at the University of Santo Tomas High School. Prof. Lagrosa was the Executive Director of the Ateneo Human Resource Center and pioneered the Leadership and Management Program of the World Health Organization Learning Center. Her dissertation research focus is on transformational women leadership in organizations.

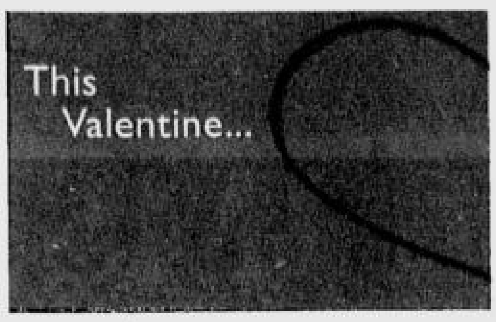
Prof. Gaston D. Ortigas, Jr. joined the AIM faculty in 1984. He is on the core faculty of the Master in Development Management and the Master in Business Management programs. His research areas of interest include: sustainable enterprise management, electronic commerce, knowledge management, and flexible learning methodologies. As Executive Managing Director for New Programs Development, Prof. Ortigas is responsible for enabling the development of strategic programs and service offerings for the institute's fourth decade of operations.

Prof. Soledad A. Hernando, PhD, Has a doctoral degree in Educational Sociology-Anthropology from the University of the Philippines and is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi, international honor society. She was a Professorial Lecturer at the University of the Philippines, Faculty of the Career Executive Service Development Program of the Philippines and Strategic Planning and Organizational Development Consultant of several government and non-government agencies. Prof. Hernando introduced innovative course offerings in the Master in Development Management program such as the Learning Methodologies module and the Mentoring Program system.

Prof. Teresita C. del Rosario holds a doctorate degree in Sociology from Boston College (2002).Prof. del Rosario was formerly on the faculty of the Sociology Department of the University of the Philippines (UP) and the Development Studies Program at the Ateneo de Manila University. She was also the deputy director for research and training at the Third World Studies Center of the UP. She has authored several articles and studies which have appeared in publications in the Philippines, South Africa, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom.

Prof. Cecilia B. Manikan is the Director of the Managing the Arts Program and handles courses in Creative and Intuitive Management for the other schools of the Institute. She holds a Master in Business Management from the Asian Institute of Management (1976). A consultant of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and other mission-oriented arts organizations, she represents the arts and culture sector to the Philippine Forum. A pioneer in arts management in the Philippines, Prof. Manikan's career has been dedicated to serving the arts. Her other areas of interest include arts education, mysticism and spirituality. Aside from creating a model for professional arts management in the country, Prof. Manikan played a crucial role in being able to provide financial and long-term economic security to Filipino dance practitioners.

Prof. Maurino P. Bolante. Professor Bolante is the Program Director of the Master in Business Management Program (MBM) 2003. He served as a Senior Consultant at the Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE) and was involved in the design and development of course materials, cases and teaching notes for the ME Program. He conducts training programs for various organizations in the areas of strategic planning, financial management, credit and financial systems, business management, marketing management, and trainor's training. Prof. Bolante holds a Diploma in Industrial Management from the Research Institute for Management Science in Delft, The Netherlands (1984) and a Master of Business Administration from the Ateneo de Manila University (1987).


This Valentine...

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre ◉ Associate Editor Edmund L. Sicam

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Pacino tops US box office with 'The Recruit'

By Dean Goodman

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood icon Al Pacino and Irish heartthrob Colin Farrell enlisted millions of moviegoers for their new spy thriller "The Recruit," which topped the North American box office on Sunday.

PACINO. Hollywood icon. AFP

First three days

The movie, the first No. 1 from Walt Disney Co. since "The Santa Clause 2" three months ago, grossed $16.5 million in its first three days.

New releases also took the Nos. 2 and 3 spots, while last weekend's champion, the thriller "Darkness Falls," fell to No. 5 with $7.5 million.

The slasher flick "Final Destination 2" opened at No. 2 with $16.2 million, followed by the African-American motorbike drama "Biker Boyz" with $10.1 million. The family crime caper "Kangaroo Jack" slipped two places to No. 4 with $9 million.

"The Recruit" stars Pacino as a CIA recruiter and Farrell as one of his students at the agency's training facility. Bridget Moynahan plays Farrell's love interest.

Twists and turns

Disney distribution president Chuck Viane said the film offered plenty of "twists and turns," while Farrell "proved he has got the right stuff."

The 26-year-old Dublin native previously starred in the little-seen war movie "Tigerland" and last year's Tom Cruise vehicle "Minority Report." He is now keeping the gossip pages busy with tales of his romantic escapades.

For Pacino, 62, his last No. 1 movie was the football drama "Any Given Sunday" in December 1999.

"Final Destination 2" beat the $10 million bow of the 2000 original. Considerably more graphic, with decapitations, gougings, skull piercings and amputations, the film pits a woman with special gifts (A.J. Cook) against the grim reaper. It rated strongest among its target demographic of viewers aged 21 to 34. Its distributor, New Line Cinema, is a unit of AOL Time Warner Inc.

"Biker Boyz" revolves around a collection of black motorcycle clubs in Los Angeles and a climactic race between stars Laurence Fishburne and Derek Luke. Rock star Kid Rock adds some fuel to the ensemble. The film was released by privately held DreamWorks SKG.

After three weeks, "Kangaroo Jack" hopped to $45.9 million and should end up with about $75 million, said Dan Fellman, president of distribution at Warner Bros., also a unit of AOL Time Warner. It was budgeted at about $60 million.

Old ghoul

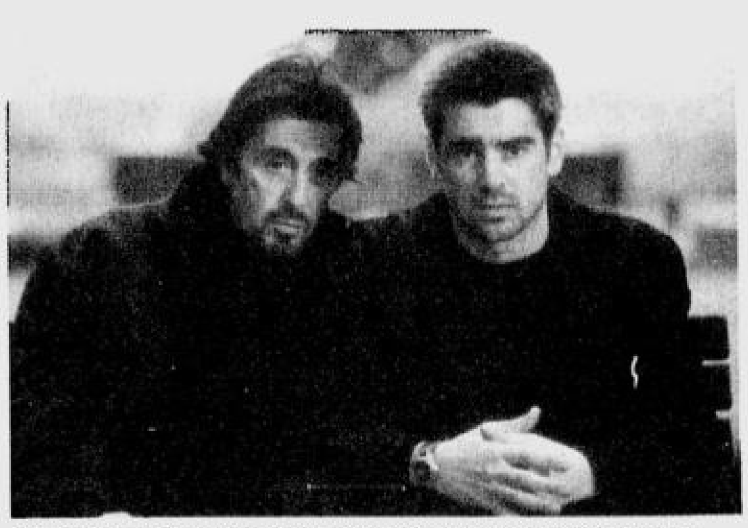
"Darkness Falls," revolving around an old ghoul dubbed the Tooth Fairy, advanced to $22.3 million after 10 days. Its distributor, Columbia Pictures, is a unit of Sony Corp. The film cost $11 million to make.

Among new limited releases, the romantic New Age satire "The Guru" enchanted a promising $648,000 from just 62 theaters in the top 10 markets. The low-budget film, which stars English actor Jimi Mistry, Heather Graham and Marisa Tomei, was released by Universal Pictures, a unit of Vivendi Universal SA.

In the milestone department, seventh-ranked "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" added $5 million to reach $315.9 million and pass the total of its 2001 predecessor. "The Fellowship of the Ring" took 116 days to reach $313 million. The sequel passed that mark last Saturday, its 45th day.

Assuming the fantasy epic gets a few mentions when Academy Award nominations are announced on Feb. 11, New Line executives hope it will finish with about $350 million.

New releases next weekend include the comedies "How To Lose a Guy in 10 Days," starring Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey; "Shanghai Knights," starring Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson; and "Deliver Us From Eva," starring LL Cool J and Gabrielle Union. *Reuters*


PACINO and Farrell play dangerous mind games in their new spy thriller. AP

'The Recruit' makes covert operations look sexy and exciting

By Christy Lemire

NEW YORK—"The Recruit" does what every good spy movie should do, at least for its first two-thirds: It makes covert operations, in the name of something as stodgy and buttoned-down as patriotism, look sexy and exciting.

Voyeuristic thrill

It helps a great deal that the film has sexy and exciting co-stars in Colin Farrell and Bridget Moynahan, and we get to enjoy the voyeuristic thrill of watching them endure the rigors at CIA training camp.

As recruits James Clayton and Layla Moore, Farrell and Moynahan learn how to pass a lie detector test, blow up cars and practice surveillance on fellow students—and look great doing it. Even flirting at a bar and bluffing at poker become part of the game.

The veteran spy who discovered them and is grooming them, Walter Burke (Al Pacino), plays plenty of dangerous mind games of his own.

At a restaurant, Burke says nonchalantly to James, "Don't look now—by the bar, we're being followed." But are they really? And when James is kidnapped and tortured, we don't know whether it's real or an elaborate simulation.

Burke also instills in them a timely sense of duty.

Enemies

"Our cause is just," he says. "Our enemies, everywhere." It's a line that could have been lifted from President George W. Bush's recent State of the Union address.

His real mantras though, are "Trust no one" and "Nothing is as it seems."

So it's not exactly a surprise to discover through a series of increasingly unbelievable double-crosses that the seemingly good people are bad, and vice versa. It took three writers (Roger Towne, Kurt Wimmer and Mitch Glazer) to come up with the big climactic twist, but you could have anticipated it back when Burke found James, who was a hotshot at MIT.

Burke tells James that he suspects Layla is a mole, and sends him to find out what she's after and who she's working with: James and Layla had an instant attraction for each other, so Burke figures it shouldn't be too hard for James to seduce her to accomplish his mission.

He also dangles nuggets of information about James' father, who died in a plane crash in Peru in 1990, and may have been a spy himself.

James is torn—Layla's hot, and he kinda likes her—but decides duty to country is more important. *AP*

Seña breaks new ground in latest Cayabyab work

By Rito P. Asilo

AFTER his well-deserved acclaim in recording and his stint in Lucio San Pedro's last *sarswela*, Robert Seña takes on another challenge when he plays Juan Luna in "Spoliarium," the neo-classical opera—a first for the actor—by Ryan Cayabyab that opens on Feb. 21 at the CCP Main Theater. The thrill for musical theater fans lies in the fusion of Robert's soaring tenor voice and Cayabyab's exciting music.

Dream

"I am thrilled to finally realize my dream of doing an opera," Robert said when we interviewed him last week. He explained, "It's the challenge of doing different types of musicals that excites me."

Indeed, when one checks out his prodigious body of work, it is an enviable hodgepodge of genres, solid proof of Seña's versatility as a total performer.

To name a few: his critically-acclaimed turns in the West-End productions of the pop musical "Ms. Saigon" and the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar;" playing Dolphy in the memorable "Katy!;" the male lead in the ground-breaking "Magsimula Ka;" playing for laughs (and showing his derriere) in "Etiquette for Mistresses;" playing a baddie in "Rama at Sita;" singing *sarswela* in San Pedro's "Bayan," etc.

And now, an opera, especially written to suit his naturally high voice! We heard the production was hard-pressed to look for a suitable alternate. The opera's sustained high C's have never found a better voice to interpret them with such ease and flair!

When asked how different he found this production from his past stage outings, Robert's face lit up to acknowledge the challenge he faced the minute he decided to accept the role.

He revealed, "This is, by far, the most demanding role I've ever done, emotionally and vocally. My vocal control was maximized here—from *pianissimo* (very soft) to *fortissimo* (loud), and back."

He said he had to work hard because he does not read notes. But then again, Luciano Pavarotti doesn't, either!

Complicated

He adds, "The music is great but, at the same time, very complicated. *'Pag na-off ka sa* accompaniment, out *ka na talaga sa* music. You have to learn how to place your voice or else you'll destroy it. At the same time, you shouldn't be too conscious about vocal placement at the risk of losing focus on your role—*baka hindi na lalabas ang* character *mo*."

How would he describe Ryan's music—he being a veteran of a number of Cayabyab musicals? He avers, "The music gives me goosebumps! It's a Cayabyab work alright, *mapapansin mo ang mga detalye ng* style *ni* Ryan. It just keeps building up from beginning to end."

SEÑA. Most challenging role.

And that was just the music we were talking about! The story and his character were another matter.

Hero

He explains, "You see the hero, the painter of world renown, humanized here. I was fascinated by Luna's character—his temperament, his selfishness, his brilliance. What, or whom, did he love more, his art or his wife?

"All these questions make him deserving of a full-length musical or opera, with the dramatic conflicts and tragedies in his life presented, along with his gifts as an outstanding painter. *Napaka*-colorful *ng buhay n'ya*, very cinematic!"

Tormented

Another challenge for Robert was portraying the hero with his human failings, without making him look like a common criminal. He explains, "He was obviously a tormented soul, a true artist. The challenge was to bring out his real motivations despite his *mayabang* and insecure exterior. If there are gaps in the script that can't convincingly explain your character's actions, it's part of your work as an actor to find the motivation yourself."

Robert said he had to lose 10 pounds because Luna was "very athletic. He was into fencing, and collected guns." This dedication to his craft is what keeps Robert a consistently exciting performer—a passion and dedication that should be learned by all actors of the legitimate stage.

When we asked him if he had an unforgettable experience while doing 'Spoliarium,' he had a ready answer: "When I saw and actually touched Juan Luna's 'Spoliarium' painting! *Tumayo ang balahibo ko!*"

Leo DiCaprio makes strong film comeback

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER "Titanic" made more than $1.5 B at the tills, Leonardo DiCaprio truly became the King of the (Film) World. He ruled the Hollywood roost and, in the eyes of producers, could do nothing wrong—until his follow-up movies bombed.

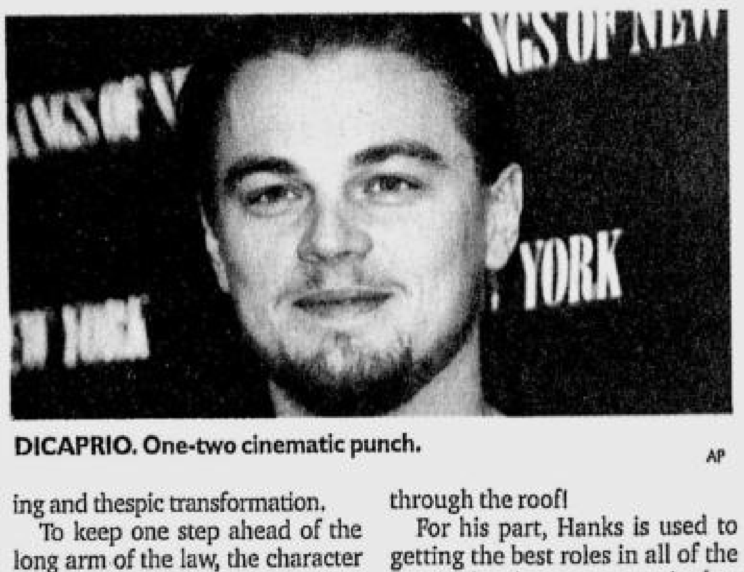
Depression

Then followed a period of depression, rage and frittering away weeks and months with a coterie of shiftless hangers-on. But, when DiCaprio turned 27 years old, he realized that he had to get his act together fast, or end up as one of the movie industry's youngest has-beens.

Luckily for him, name directors still believed in his talent, if not in his work ethic. And he was still popular enough to fast-track important film projects and get financing from big studios.

Young con artist

The Steven Spielberg got Leo's comeback going in a big way, casting him as a young con artist in "Catch Me If You Can." The role was a major challenge—and acting showcase—for Leo because it required him to do a lot of role-playing and thespic transformation.


DICAPRIO. One-two cinematic punch. AP

To keep one step ahead of the long arm of the law, the character played by the young superstar had to keep changing his identity—from pilot to director, to teacher—etc!

Magic

The Spielberg-DiCaprio combination alone spells magic at the box office, but the movie has an extra plus in the presence of no less than Tom Hanks in the key role of the FBI agent who tracks the con artist down, despite his brilliance as a master impersonator.

Spielberg-DiCaprio-Hanks? Watch this film's income go through the roof!

For his part, Hanks is used to getting the best roles in all of the movies he chooses to star in, but he concedes that "Catch Me If You Can" is Leo's film. So, why did he want to be in it? "Because it's just so *good!*" the film world's most popular star grins.

Best role

As if to make sure that his comeback will be a major triumph, DiCaprio has also snagged the best role in another film directed by a revered director—"Gangs of New York," megged by none other than Martin Scorsese.

It turns out that Scorsese has been wanting to make this film for the past 25 years, and DiCaprio's clout has finally made his fond cinematic dream a reality.

"Gangs of New York" is set in New York City in the 19th century, and focuses on the gang wars between different immigrant groups. They provide the sweeping background to the personal story of DiCaprio's character, a young man who avenges his father's murder at the hands of an exceedingly evil man played by Daniel Day-Lewis.

Combination

If "Catch Me If You Can" boasts of its rare Spielberg-DiCaprio-Hanks Stellar combination, "Gangs of New York" has a different but similarly compelling dramatic cachet in its Scorsese-DiCaprio-Day-Lewis troika. Add Cameron Diaz to the top-caliber line-up and you get a production that has Oscar *and* box-office gold written all over it.

With this one-two cinematic punch, the success of Leo DiCaprio's comeback is a foregone conclusion. Let's hope that he's learned his lessons well, so his return to the top of Hollywood's A-1 stellar list will be for keeps.

Dancing and singing lessons pay off for 'Chicago' stars

LONDON—The highly touted film version of the blockbuster stage musical "Chicago" had its premiere recently, and star Renee Zellweger told fans she was anxious about singing in the movie.

"I was so nervous at the audition, because it is the first time I've opened my mouth to sing in front of anyone but my dog," she said.

Real world

"But being in the movie was a thrill for me. Compared to Broadway dancers I wouldn't get past the first cut in the real world, but I just got this lucky chance."

Zellweger plays sassy murderer Roxie Hart in the film adaptation of the raucous gangster-era black comedy.

The Kander and Ebb musical of crime, corruption and sex is one of the biggest theater successes of the last decade, a huge hit on Broadway and London's West End and in productions around the world.

The Miramax Films release, costing an estimated $45 million, has already generated Academy Award buzz and massive publicity.

Jailmate

Catherine Zeta-Jones plays Hart's jailmate and fellow murderer Velma Kelley and Richard Gere is smarmy lawyer Billy Flynn, who promises to save the sexy killers from death row.

ZELLWEGER. Lucky chance. AP

Gere, who attended the premiere with his wife Carey Lowell, described training for his tap dancing scene:

"It took me five months to learn how to do it and it was very hard work," he said. "I was so shy about it I wouldn't even rehearse in front of my wife."

He said the stars were all impressed by one another's previously untested musical and dancing skills.

"We didn't know each other well before we started and we were all thinking, 'I wonder if she can do it, I wonder if he can do it," he said. "When we finally saw each other perform we were all like 'Wow!'" *AP*

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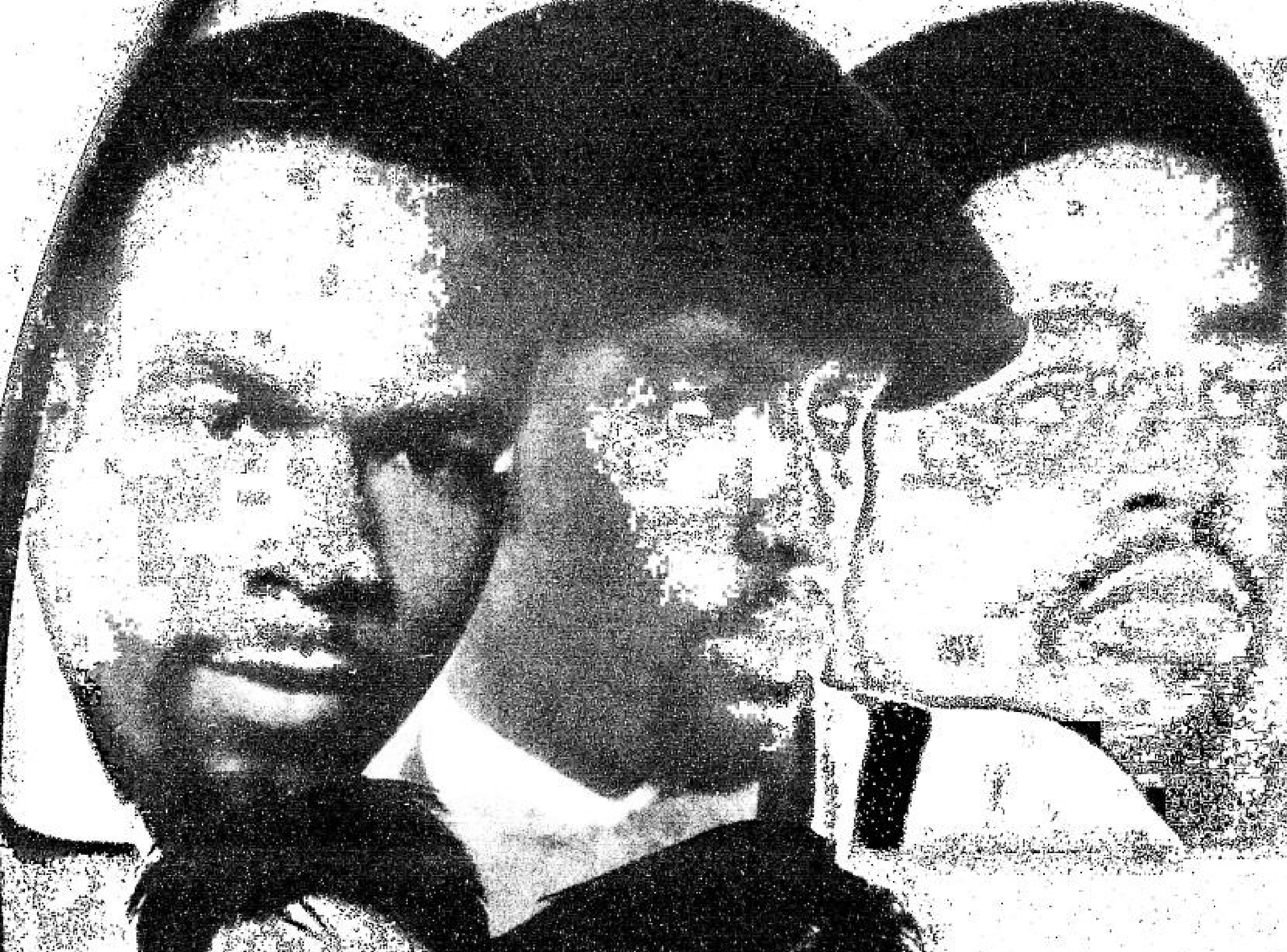

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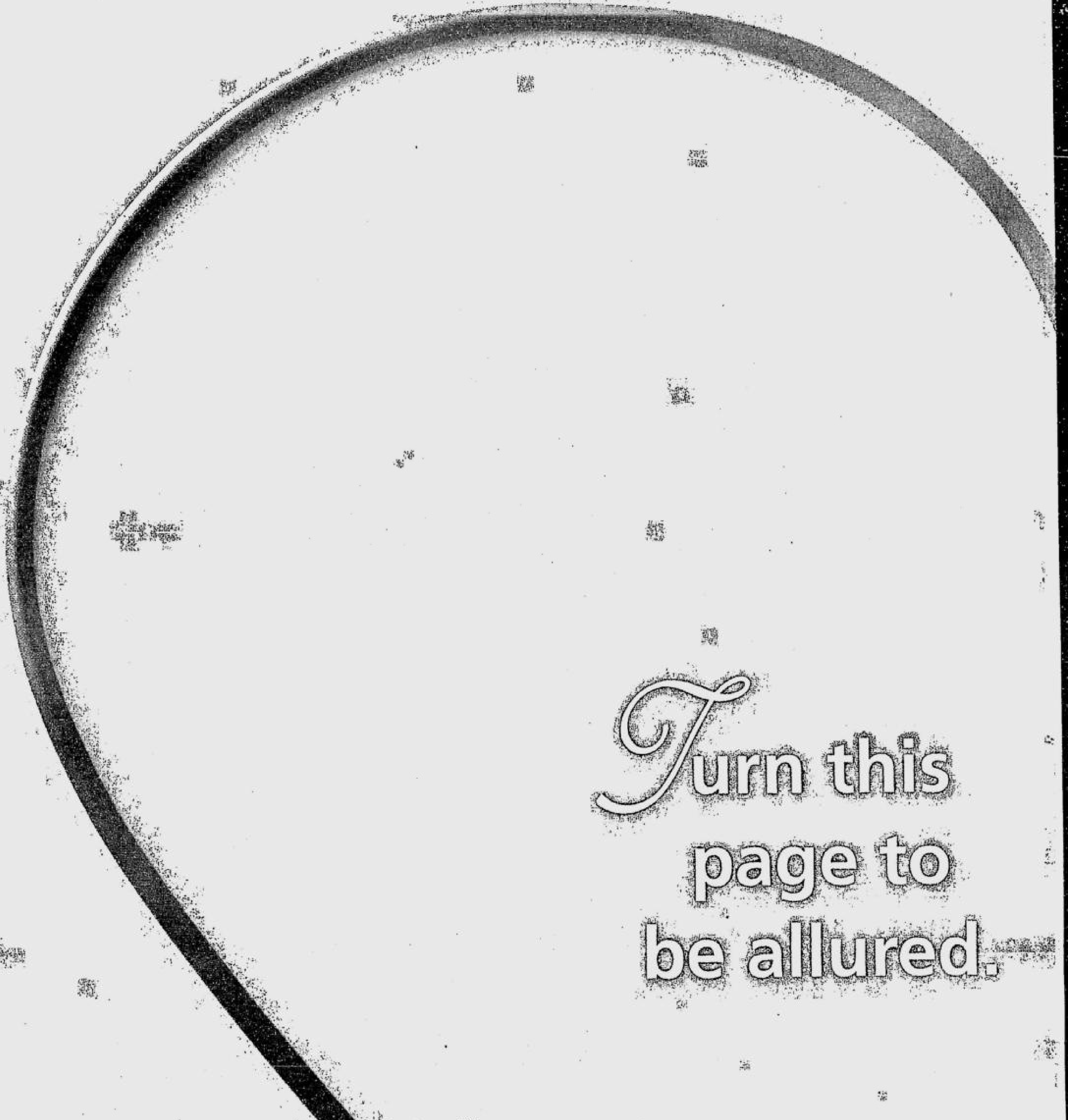

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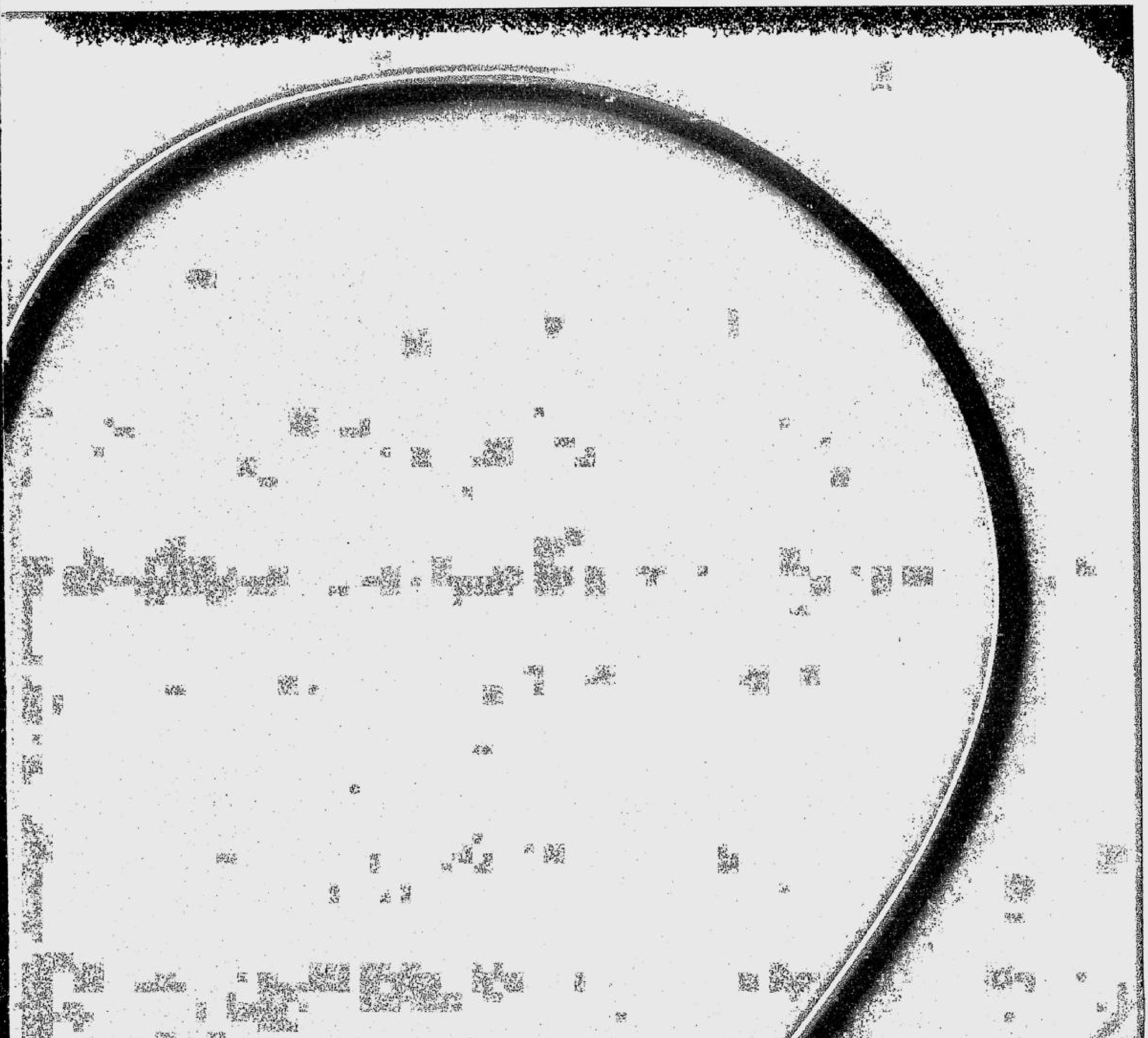

SMART
Simply Amazing!

Eternal youth keeps 'The Simpsons' fresh

By Steve Gorman

LOS ANGELES—For more than a decade, they have reigned as television's favorite dysfunctional family, and now "The Simpsons" will soon enter the record books as the longest-running sitcom in prime-time history.

Animated social satire

Now in their 14th season of animated social satire on Fox television, that beer-guzzling, dough-nut-chomping family man Homer Simpson and all the good citizens of Springfield have shown no signs of ageing as they near their 300th episode.

With its ratings on the rise, "The Simpsons" remains one of the most watched TV shows in the United States and was one of the rare bright spots on the Fox line-up during an overall slump in the News Corp.-owned network's audience earlier this season.

It also remains a perennial favorite among critics and in December earned its first Golden Globe nomination in the race for best comedy series, a rare feat for a cartoon show, even though it didn't win.

Earlier this month, the network announced that it had renewed the series for two more years, until May 2005, meaning "The Simpsons" will stay on the air for at least 16 seasons.

By then, they will have easily eclipsed the real-life Nelson family on "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" as the longest-running weekly comedy series on American TV. The Nelsons left ABC in 1966 after 14 seasons on the air.

But long before a very different Ozzy came to MTV as head of "The Osbournes" unruly household on MTV, "The Simpsons" had established itself as a worldwide pop culture phenomenon seen in more than 70 countries.

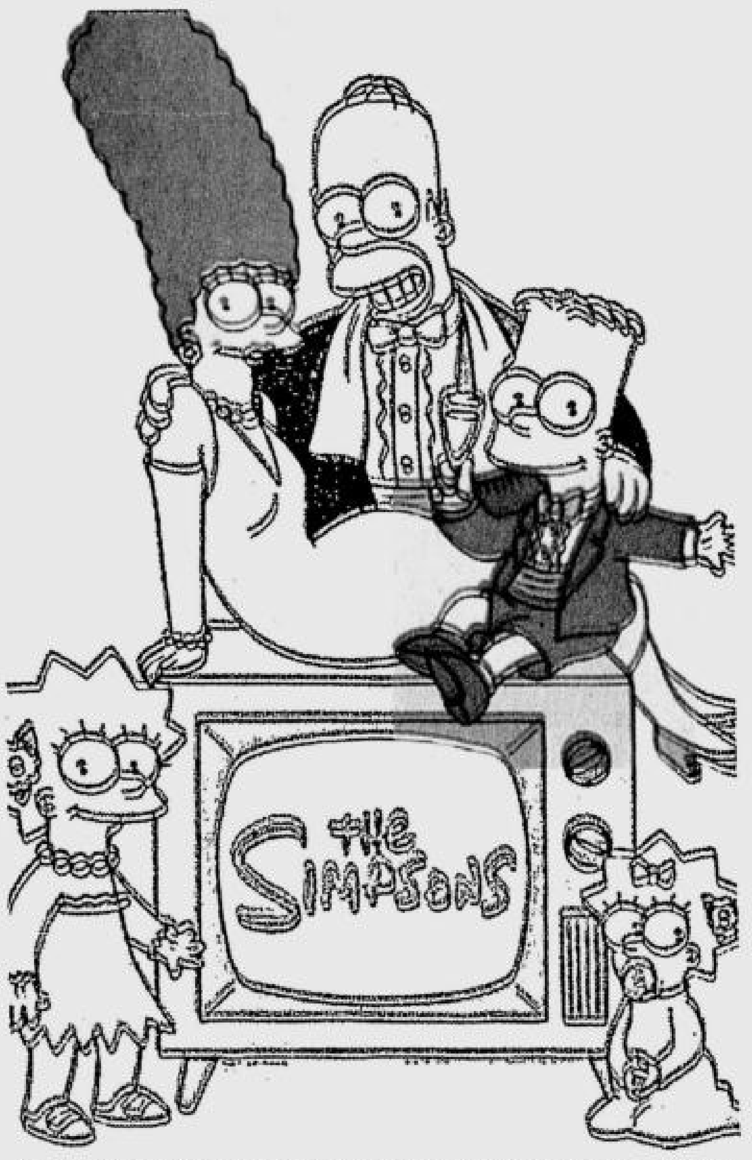
According to the show's creator and executive producer Matt Groening, eternal youth is a key ingredient of its enduring success.

Characters

"I didn't expect to be on the air this long," Groening said at Fox's winter showcase for critics. "One of the great things about doing an animated show is your characters don't age. So your show stays fresh, and you keep the audience fresh. I love '60 Minutes,' but the people who make it are starting to look like the people who watch it."

For Harry Shearer, the voice of Homer's tyrannical boss, Mr Burns, and the saccharin, Bible-thumping neighbour, Ned Flanders, the challenge of performing several characters is what keeps the show interesting.

"I would get enormously bored, even after seven years, just coming in and doing this one character every week," Shearer said. "For the actors, one of the great things about making this show fun after all these years is all the different characters we do."



"THE SIMPSONS." Television's favorite show about a dysfunctional family will soon enter the record books as the longest-running sitcom in prime-time history. REUTERS

One thing is certain. It isn't big bucks that keeps the ensemble coming back year after year.

Silly questions

"Altogether, we still don't make as much as one 'Friend,'" joked Dan Castellaneta, the voice of Homer, alluding to the reported $1 million per episode earned by each of the six principal members of NBC's hit comedy "Friends."

The actors clearly enjoy their work, even if they have to suffer silly questions from fans at public appearances.

"The strangest question I ever got is: Do I sound like Lisa Simpson when I'm having sex? And the answer is no," said voice actress Yeardley Smith.

Beginning as a string of cartoon shorts on the "Tracey Ullman Show" in 1987, "The Simpsons" made their debut as a half-hour series on the then-fledgling Fox network in January 1990.

At the outset, the series centered on the hijinks of the wisecracking, under-achieving 10-year-old Bart Simpson, a spiky-haired misfit who darts around town on his skateboard and drives his fourth-grade teacher nuts.

But as the show evolved, its focus shifted to Bart's boneheaded father, Homer, who works at a nuclear power plant and punctuates his frequent mistakes with the anguished, half-syllable utterance "D'Oh!" Castellaneta said he adopted Homer's signature expletive from a character in an old Laurel and Hardy film. "I think it's a euphemism for 'damn.'"

Rounding out the Simpsons clan are beehive-haired mother Marge, the sensible, good-natured anchor of the family, and Bart's two sisters—pacifier-sucking baby Maggie, a silent observer of all, and second-grade prodigy Lisa, a baritone saxophone virtuoso and intellectual of the family.

Fictional town

Behind them is a huge cast of regulars who populate the fictional town of Springfield—extended family members, neighbours, teachers, classmates, Homer's co-workers, his pals at Moe's Tavern, Apu the convenience store clerk, police chief Wiggum and even the Comic Book Guy.

The show derives much of its humor from sharp-edged social commentary, skewering authority figures and such hallowed institutions as public education, politics, the medical profession, law enforcement and the entertainment industry. The series also is known for the steady parade of guest celebrities who lend their voices, and in many cases their animated caricatures, to cameo appearances.

Actress Jane Kaczmarek of "Malcolm in the Middle" will reprise her role as Judge Harm for the upcoming 300th episode in which Bart goes to court to win emancipation from his parents after learning that he starred in a commercial as a baby and that Homer squandered all of his earnings. *Reuters*

Musical treats and siblings' stories delight Manay Ichu

By Nestor U. Torre

AT Marichu Vera-Perez Maceda's recent 60th birthday *asalto*, her well-wishers made up of family and close friends were thoroughly delighted with the program put on by her sons and grandchildren.

Highlight

The Maceda boys' snazzy dance was a big highlight of the evening, but it was upstaged by the song number contributed by Manay Ichu's grandchildren, whose delightful performance proved that the Vera-Perez flair for entertainment is alive and well in the clan's third generation.

Aside from the musical treats rendered with a whole lot of love, the evening was made special by the colorful and loving memories shared by Marichu's siblings.

Pepito winkingly observed, "She's always maintained a very high moral ground—I'm not saying I didn't! When we were eight years old or so, we had an all-out fight—and, like in a heavyweight championship bout, she lost a tooth. So, the two of us were separated for a time.

Game

"I thought I had won the 'bout,' but I had another think coming: Later, *tinulak niya ako* into a big garbage can. So, watch out, if you've done her wrong, she has a way of getting back at you!"

Kokoy, the family's youngest, observed that there was a 20-year age gap between him and his Manay Ichu, so they weren't that close. But he recalled an instructive experience in 1998 when they all went on a trip to the US:

Extremely heavy

He offered to help her with her big bag, which turned out to be extremely heavy. And, no wonder: It turned out that its contents were a VHS cassette recorder—and 36 blank tapes! "Why not buy the tapes in the States?," he wondered. In addition, another big bag contained 24 rolls of her favorite toilet paper!

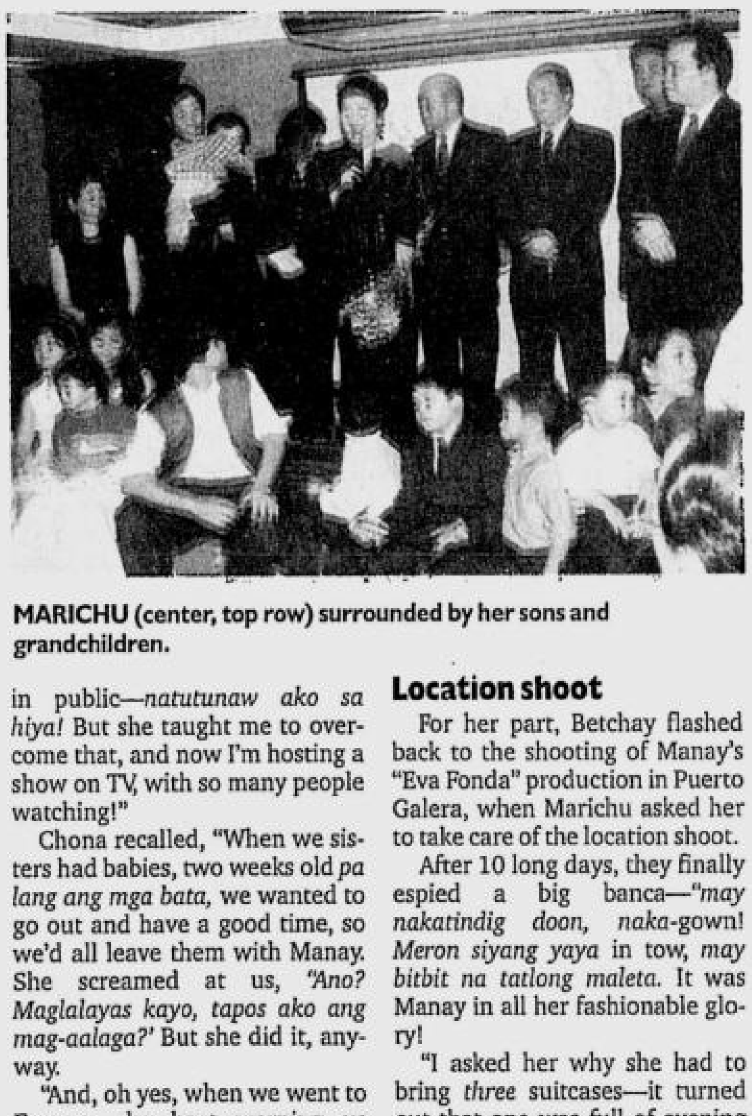
Finally, the people in the three rooms they stayed in couldn't watch TV because Marichu, the taping freak, had all the TV sets on "record," to tape all sorts of programs and TV movies!

As for Gina (De Venecia), she shared, "*Manay* was always my mother superior—*lagi akong kino*-correct! *Naging* ladylike *ako dahil sa kanya.*

Loyal

"*At, lahat ng kaaway ko,* automatically *kaaway rin niya. Ganoon siya ka*-loyal. *Kahit pinatawad ko na, kaaway pa rin niya!*

"She's such a perfectionist. And she gave me self-confidence. Before, I was scared of speaking in public—*natutunaw ako sa hiya!* But she taught me to overcome that, and now I'm hosting a show on TV, with so many people watching!"



MARICHU (center, top row) surrounded by her sons and grandchildren.

Chona recalled, "When we sisters had babies, two weeks old *pa lang ang mga bata,* we wanted to go out and have a good time, so we'd all leave them with Manay. She screamed at us, *'Ano? Maglalayas kayo, tapos ako ang mag-aalaga?'* But she did it, anyway.

"And, oh yes, when we went to Europe, she kept warning us about pickpockets—*'Ingatan niyo ang mga* wallet *niyo,'* over and over—*tapos, siya ang ninakawan!*"

Location shoot

For her part, Betchay flashed back to the shooting of Manay's "Eva Fonda" production in Puerto Galera, when Marichu asked her to take care of the location shoot.

After 10 long days, they finally espied a big banca—"*may nakatindig doon, naka*-gown! *Meron siyang yaya* in tow, *may bitbit na tatlong maleta.* It was Manay in all her fashionable glory!

"I asked her why she had to bring *three* suitcases—it turned out that one was full of evening wear (for the *beach*?!), the other was for her lingerie, and the third was for her casual wear. *Iba talaga si Manay!*

FROM left, Ms Nene Vera-Perez, Gina De Venecia, Boots Anson-Roa, Marichu, Susan Roces and Imee Marcos.

INTERVIEWER Boy Abunda (left) with Manay Ichu's siblings—Pepito, Kokoy, Gina, Betchay and Chona.

Fruit stand

"*Isa pa: sa lahat ng kapatid ko, siya ang walang* business sense. One time, we put up a fruit stand. But, instead of selling the fruits, *naawa siya sa mga kapitbahay naming* squatter, *binigyan niya ng prutas—lugi!*"

After the laughter had died down, Marichu's siblings made instant "*cambio*" and chorused: "Anyway, Manay, we love you!" The delighted look on Manay Ichu's face said it all: loving message received—and deeply appreciated!

Kevin Richardson tackles politics and a role on Broadway

RICHARDSON, a member of the Backstreet Boys pop group, has taken over the role of Billy Flynn in the Broadway production of "Chicago." AP

He's a young political activist who wants people to see beyond his pop songs and pretty face

By Justin Glanville

NEW YORK—"You don't want to get me started on this," Kevin Richardson warns, shaking his head and pushing aside his lunch. "I could go on all day."

Band

The status of his band, the Backstreet Boys? His job as the latest Billy Flynn in the Broadway version of "Chicago"?

Neither. Richardson is all worked up about mining in the Appalachian mountains—an environmental travesty, in his book.

"Dude, I'm telling you, if the public could see what was going on, there would be an uprising," he says. "It looks like a war zone. I mean, the entire tops of mountains—gone. Generations and generations of families that have lived there forced out."

In this era of boy band diversification—Nick Carter and Justin Timberlake have solo albums, Lance Bass is acting—Richardson has chosen a most unusual side career: that of political activist.

It's not that he's left the entertainment industry. On the contrary, there is a new Backstreet album planned for this fall, and he's currently starring in "Chicago," playing the corrupt lawyer who helps exonerate a murderer. He'll be in the show through March 9 at the Ambassador Theater.

But these days, you're almost as likely to see Richardson on Capitol Hill as on stage.

Ills

He was in Washington two years ago to lobby for more cancer-research funding. And last June, he testified before Congress about the ills of mountaintop removal—a type of mining in which the tops of mountains are displaced to extract coal.

"People think I'm some kid," he says. "But we (Backstreet Boys) have been touring for eight years, all over the world, and I've been soaking everything in. I'm a 31-year-old man who's seen a lot of things that have disturbed me. And instead of not doing anything about it, I thought I'd use my voice to express my concerns and try to help."

Not everyone appreciates Richardson's activism. His mining testimony ruffled the feathers of Sen. George Voinovich, who—in a protest against what he called Richardson's lack of expertise—boycotted the hearing.

"That was sad," Richardson says. "He was saying, 'Music has no place in politics.' Politics is for everybody. We all have a right to speak our minds."

Anyway, Richardson says, he ought to know a few things about Appalachia. He grew up in Lexington, Kentucky, practically next door to Daniel Boone National Forest. His grandfather was a miner.

Camp counselor

"I grew up in the heart of coal mine country," Richardson says. "I was a hike leader, a camp counselor—I did all that. I love nature."

He loves it so much that he has set up a nonprofit organization, Just Within Reach, to educate young people about environmental issues. Its website features photos of a pensive Richardson looking out on pristine mountainscapes, along with a newsletter, links and an online store.

He also has some strong beliefs about American foreign policy—and those beliefs, too, have gotten him into trouble.

Most notoriously, on Sept. 12, 2001, Richardson said the previous day's terrorist attacks should serve as a wake-up call to Americans that some of its policies were resented abroad. "I just think we are a little bit of an arrogant nation and maybe this is a little bit of a humbling experience," he said in a television interview.

The media jumped on the comment, and Richardson partly recanted.

"I think it was the timing of it," he says now, reflecting on the episode. "I think it was perceived as being insensitive because it was right after the attacks happened."

So what's with all the politicking? Isn't Richardson content sticking to music and acting?

In a word, no. He wants people to see beyond his pop songs and pretty face. *AP*

E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

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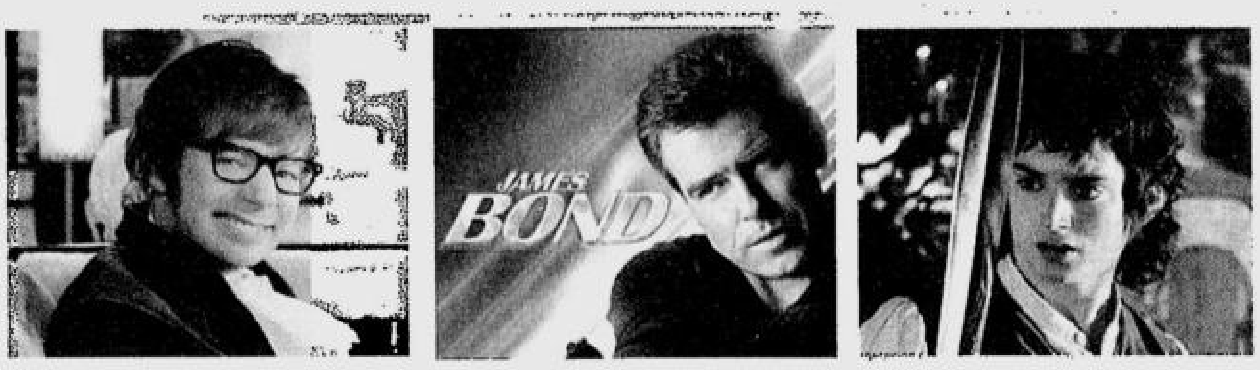

STARS OF SUCCESSFUL SEQUELS IN IN 2002: Mike Myers as Austin Powers, Pierce Brosnan as James Bond, and Elijah Wood as Frodo Baggins in "Lord of the Rings."

Franchise flicks bring another year of record revenues

By David Germain

LOS ANGELES—It was sequel this, sequel that in 2002 Hollywood, which rode a strong wave of follow-up films and some new franchises to its own repeat performance: yet another year of record revenues.

Final tally

US box-office receipts topped $9 billion for the first time, with the final tally likely to be up about 10 percent from last year's record $8.35 billion.

Although some of that increase could be attributed to an estimated 5 percent increase in the price of a movie ticket, it also reflects a healthy rise in attendance, said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

"Less originality sometimes breeds more box office," Dergarabedian said. "Much as people like to say they want to see something new, when people are spending money, it seems less of a gamble to see Mike Myers in 'Austin Powers' again."

The number of tickets sold in 2002 edged past 1.5 billion, the highest in decades, though still far below peak levels of the 1930s and '40s, before television became a prime source of entertainment.

Swankier venues

Movie attendance has risen steadily in the past decade as theater chains built swankier venues with better seating and sound, and studios threw more marketing resources into big-event pictures such as "Spider-Man," "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" and "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers," three of the year's hits.

"Spider-Man" is spinning a sequel, and the other two films already are part of franchises. Other follow-ups in 2002 included "Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones," "Austin Powers in Goldmember," "Men in Black II," "The Santa Clause 2" and the James Bond adventure "Die Another Day."

"I think the consistency with which we deliver good movies has been the key to this year," said Chuck Viane, head of distribution at Disney, which released "The Santa Clause 2" and had a hit from its Touchstone division with "Signs."

"We got to $9 billion because the vast majority of films delivered on expectations."

Studios remained focused on advertising blitzes to produce huge opening weekends. "Spider-Man" shattered the record for best first weekend, grossing $114.8 million in the first three days on its way to a $406 million total, pacing distributor Sony to a nearly $1.6 billion year, a record for a single studio.

Feel-good romance

Yet the feel-good romance "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" caught Hollywood by surprise, becoming an out-of-left-field blockbuster the old-fashioned way, by viewers spreading the word.

Shot for just $5 million, a fraction compared to big studio flicks, "Greek Wedding" climbed steadily to a $218 million return, remaining in the top 20 nine months after its initial release in a fast-food climate in which most movies linger only a month or two.

"I don't think anybody could have predicted it," said Rob Schwartz, head of distribution for IFC Films, which released "Greek Wedding." "I think it was just a picture that was universal in nature and spoke to everybody. You could have substituted one of many ethnicities. Big fat Italian wedding, big fat Jewish wedding. It could have been almost anybody."

Hollywood had a record seven $200 million-plus hits—"Spider-Man," "Attack of the Clones," "Chamber of Secrets," "Signs," "Greek Wedding," "Austin Powers in Goldmember" and "The Two Towers"—one more than last year's record.

Flops

Flops included three Eddie Murphy flicks: "The Adventures of Pluto Nash," "Showtime" and "I Spy." Disney's animated "Treasure Planet" also tanked, while "Star Trek: Nemesis" faded quickly and could finish as the lowest-grossing of the sci-fi franchise's 10 movies.

At the start of 2002, studios were antsy about whether audiences would continue filling cinema seats given the economic downturn and the war on terrorism. If anything, though, moviegoers seemed more eager than ever to head to theaters and forget their cares for awhile. *AP*

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New film-viewing record set

HOW many movies can a film buff watch in one sitting? In the year 2000, a group of American viewers watched 30 films in 53 hours and 22 minutes. Then, last Jan. 6, that record was broken by moviegoers in Thailand who viewed 36 films in 64 hours and 58 minutes!

That amazing achievement proves that Asians are among the most enthusiastic film viewers in the world. Huge doses of Zenlike stoicism—and terrific bladder control—also come in handy!

We're filled with admiration for these new record-holders because our own personal viewing "record" comes up to "only" six movies in one sitting. And it totally wiped us out.

We did it thrice: the first time was when we judged a film festival and the entries were submitted late, so we had to watch them double-time, one after the other.

The next time we watched six feature films in a row was when Mever Films' Johnny Litton asked us to keep him company at the private movie theater in his Dasmariñas Village home. As a film distributor, he had to watch many films each week, and he soon got bored watching them alone.

To share both the ecstacy and the agony of marathon film viewing, he invited a group of friends to watch as many movies as they could with him, before they conked out. To make the experience less exhausting, he would ply us with food and drinks around the clock.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

We ended up feeling like decadent Romans as we gradually slumped in our seats and sagged all the way down to the thickly-carpeted floor, all the while popping grapes and other goodies into our mouths, trying with all our might to remain interested—and awake!

The third time we went on a movie marathon was at the Moscow Film Festival, where there were just too many good films on view, and not enough time to see all of them.

So, we started our viewing in the morning and kept it up until nightfall, then crawled to our hotel room to sleep, to renew our energies as best we could for the next day's delicious cinematic ordeal.

We may have been 30 films short of the new world record, but we have enough movies unreeling in our head to last us until Film Year 2010!

Why do film buffs watch so many movies? To set a new record, to catch up with the many new offerings that the bustling film world has to offer, to get a (borrowed) life—whatever. But the most basic motivation is still—a lifelong love for film!

BRIDGET Fonda as the Snow Queen.

Modern 'Snow Queen' seen through Asian director's eyes

Hong Kong action director David Wu describes the experience of directing the Hallmark Channel mega-production "Snow Queen" as a mighty challenge.

Because he is more known for action-adventure flicks, he was curious as to why Hallmark would offer a classic fairy tale to him.

Indeed, his filmography leans toward the testosterone set. He has worked as editor under world-famous Asian filmmaker John Woo in such Hong Kong slugfests as "Better Tomorrow, Better Tomorrow 2," "Killer," and "Bullet in the Head." He has also collaborated with Woo on the action-packed US TV series, "Once a Thief."

One of the more successful new filmmakers to emerge from the Hong Kong scene, Wu is now working internationally.

On his own, he has worked on such western productions as "The Adventure (2003)," "Brotherhood of the Wolf (2002)," and "The 51st State" (2001).

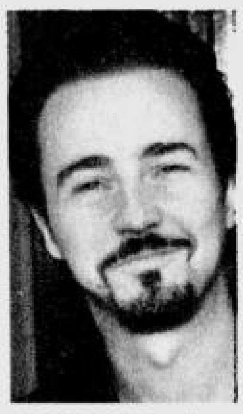
Now, he adds "Snow Queen" to his body of work. Hallmark Channel's film, which premieres this month, bears the filmmaker's distinctive touch in turning a familiar classic into something compelling and challenging.

On top of its new twists, the story has remained true to its original theme: Love conquers all.

From the very beginning, David and his producers were in agreement that only one actress could play the title character:

"Bridget Fonda is the perfect actress to portray the 'Snow Queen,'" David affirms. "She is very versatile. And it was a great experience working with her. She was very professional!"

Norton finds being an actor frustrating



NORTON. Conflict can be good for screen artists.

LOS ANGELES—He's a star who can command $9 million a movie, but Edward Norton sometimes finds the role of actor frustrating.

"I guess there's a part of me that's always resented it. If you're a painter, writer or photographer, even if no one's buying it, you can sit in your room and do it. But to be an actor, you have to have someone else say yes to you," Norton told the Los Angeles Times in an interview.

Beholden

"You're beholden. Someone else is allowing you the opportunity, and that annoys me . . . There's this sort of built-in vulnerability and lack of autonomy in terms of control of your own work as an actor. I always found that aspect of it very difficult."

That's partly why Norton, 33, the star of Spike Lee's "25th Hour," doesn't just show up and recite his lines. When he's not taking a pen to the script—as he did with "The Score" and "Frida," in which he appeared with girlfriend Salma Hayek—he's questioning the director.

"People wrestle while making movies," Norton said. "I think conflict is a very essential thing. If the reasons everyone is pushing each other have to do with a group desire to make things as good as possible, that's a great thing! I think a lot of very happy productions have produced a lot of very banal movies." *AP*

18 hit songs in Ogie's new concert album

By Leia Torre

Conclusion

THE SOMBER mood is broken by the next track in the album, "Dito Sa Puso Ko." You can almost hear Ogie bouncing around the stage in his enthusiasm.

Guest artist

But the pace slows down with the next two songs, "Mahal Kita Walang Iba" and "Hanggang Ngayon." "Hanggang Ngayon" features guest artist Regine Velasquez.

Ogie and Regine always sound good whenever they sing a duet, and this song is no exception. Their individual voices are powerful, but they do not drown each other out.

The next song, "Happy," picks up the pace again. It is one of the lesser-known songs in the album. There is a lot of drumwork in the accompaniment, which gives the song its distinctive tempo.

In this number, Ogie instigates some audience participation, and pits men against women in a little friendly competition.

Energy level

After "Happy" comes the "80's Medley." It's a long number, but the energy level stays the same all throughout, a testimony to the artist as a vital live performer.

"Sumayaw, Sumunod" is another song that has been made over especially for Ogie. It has been modernized to suit today's audience.

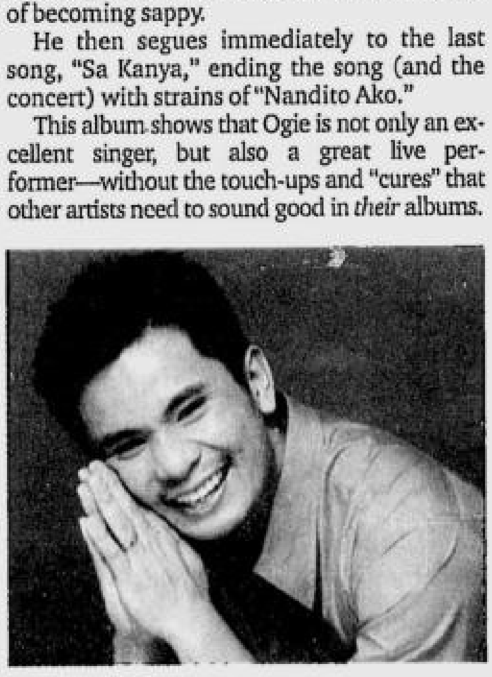
"Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang" is one of the dreamiest ballads in this album. Ogie lends the song all the emotion it deserves with his very expressive voice.

Interpretation

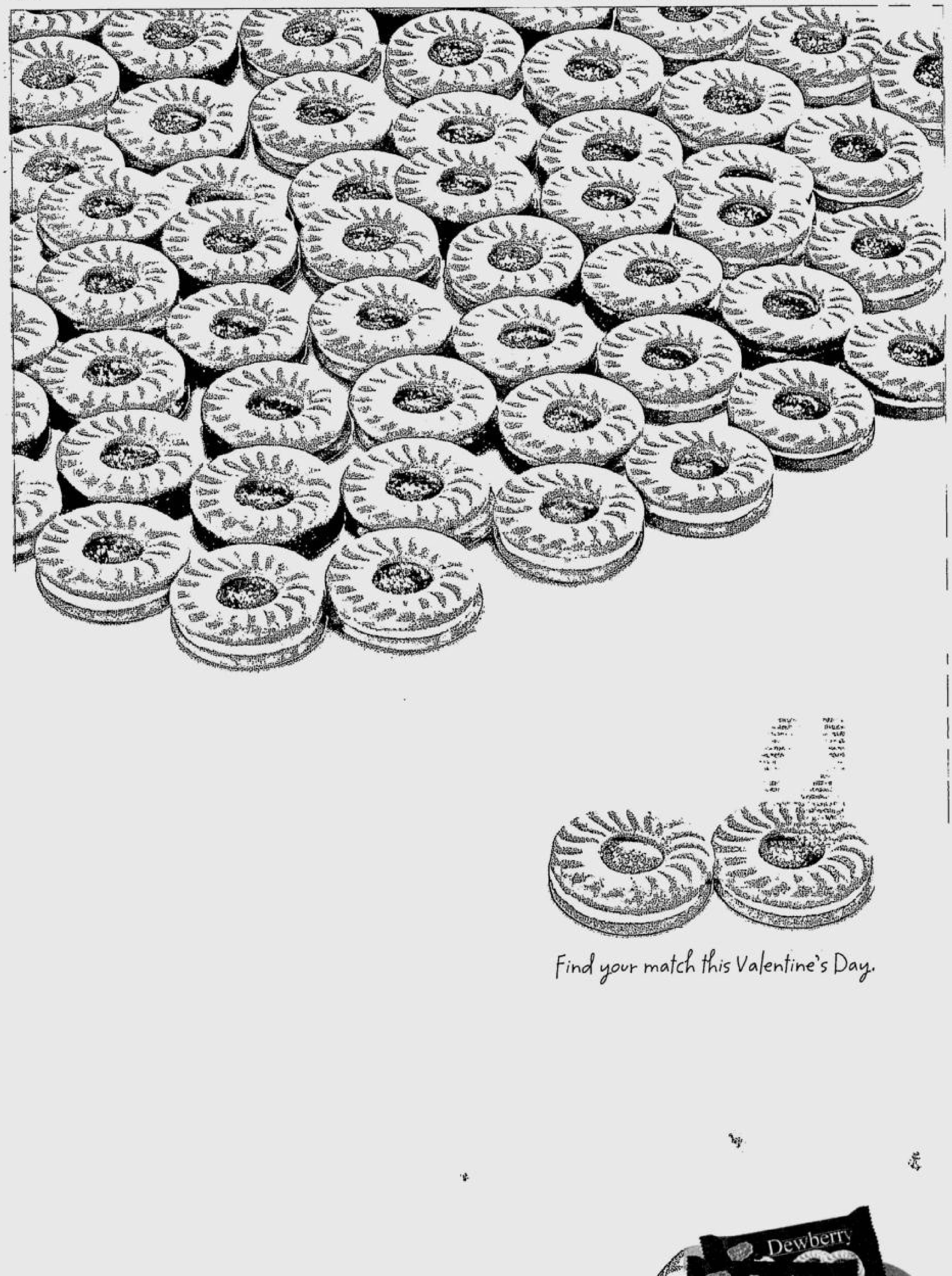
He follows up with another romantic whopper, "Nandito Ako." We have lost count of the number of artists who have performed this particular song, imbuing it with their individual style and interpretation. Ogie sings this song very sensitively, but not to the point of becoming sappy.

He then segues immediately to the last song, "Sa Kanya," ending the song (and the concert) with strains of "Nandito Ako."

This album shows that Ogie is not only an excellent singer, but also a great live performer—without the touch-ups and "cures" that other artists need to sound good in *their* albums.



ALCASID. Enthusiastic performer.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Aiza performs with Ronan Keating

KEATING. Concert at the Big Dome.

MONTAGE

AIZA Seguerra teams up with The Company in a Valentine concert that headlines British pop star Ronan Keating on Feb. 13 at the Araneta Coliseum. Also performing are Luke Mejares and Kyla. Call 911-5555.

Boys II Men at The Fort

Boys II Men will celebrate Valentine's Day in the Philippines with a one-night-only concert at The Fort Open Field on Feb. 14 at 8:30 p.m. Call 373-5734.

Ratsky's Valentine shows

Ratsky, a popular venue for live entertainment, celebrates Valentine's Day with three big shows:

At Ratsky Malate, jam with Serenity and Gladys and the Boxers with K on Feb.13. On Feb. 14 party with Maui Taylor. On Feb. 15, groove to the music of Livewire and Tribe of Levi.

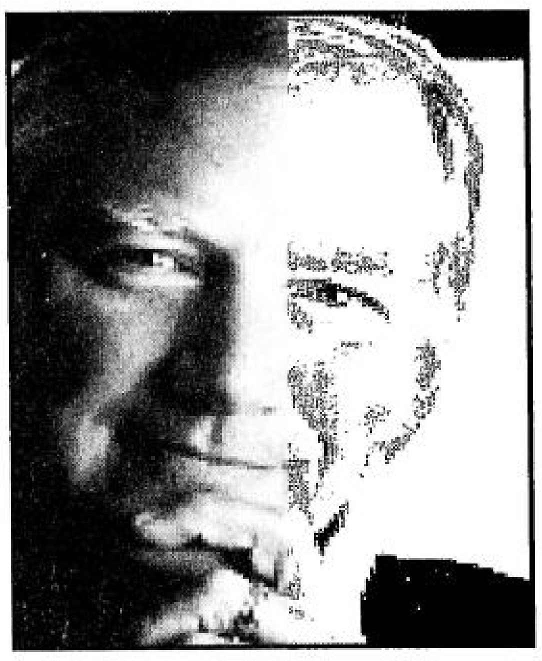
At Ratsky Morato on Feb. 13, Freeverse and 3QS. On Feb. 14, sexy star Aubrey Miles.

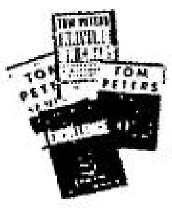
At Ratsky Cebu, Diana Zubiri performs with sing-along master Vice Ganda.

New venue for Klownz

The popular Klownz Comedy Bar of funnyman Allan K and his partner Lito Alejandre has moved to a new location—the Sunshine Boulevard Plaza on Quezon ave.

The carnival-inspired venue has a seating capacity of 700 and has a spacious and well-guarded parking area. The place is furnished with the latest sound equipment and paintings designed by members of the UP Artists' Circle.





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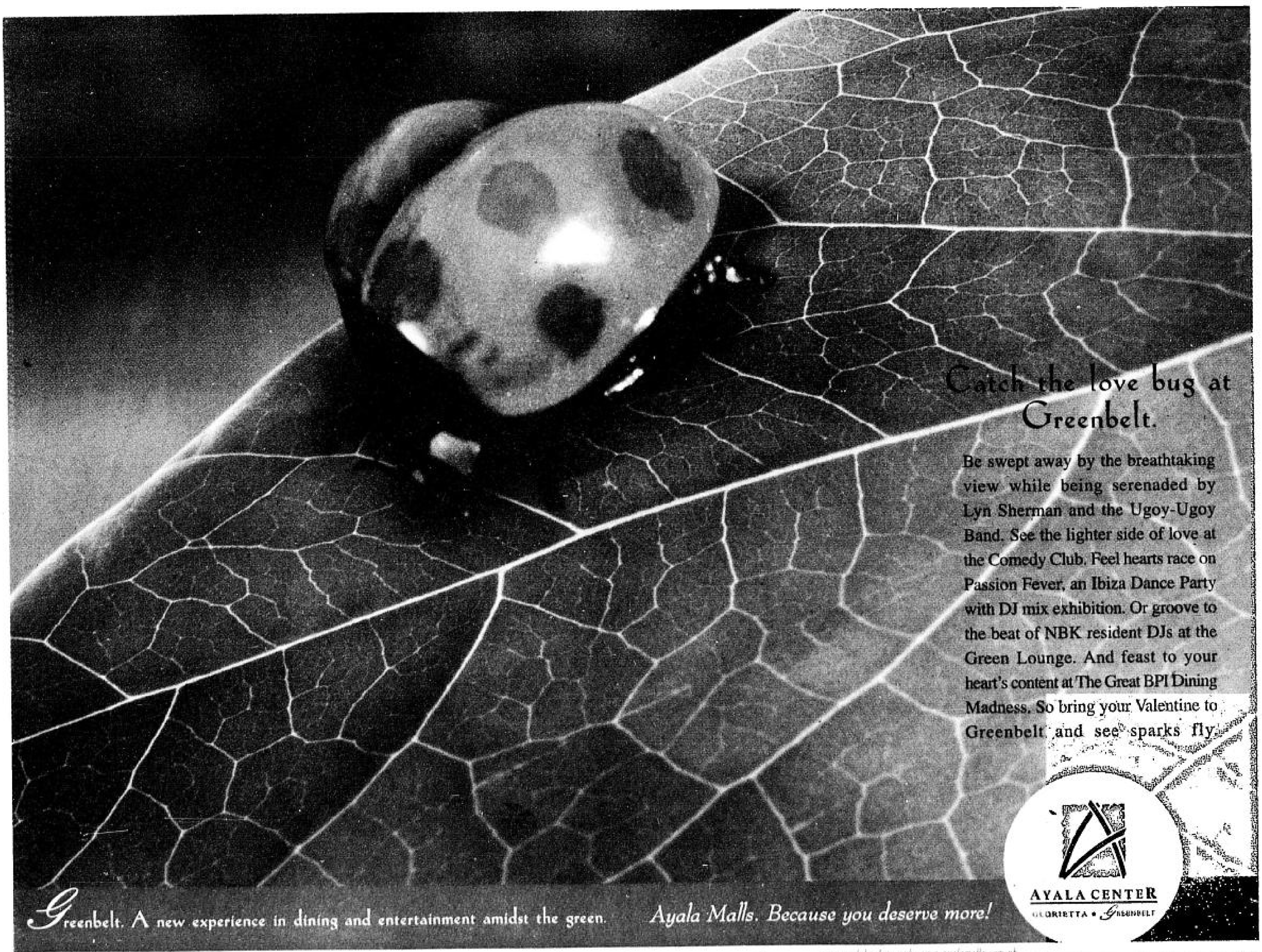

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Green Lounge with NBK DJs Manolet Dario, Adrian Cuenca, and Juno Oebanda	Feb 14	9pm onwards	Greenbelt 2
Lyn Sherman & Ugoy-Ugoy Band	Feb 14	8pm	Greenbelt 3 Park
The Great BPI Dining Madness	Feb 21 onwards		Greenbelt 2

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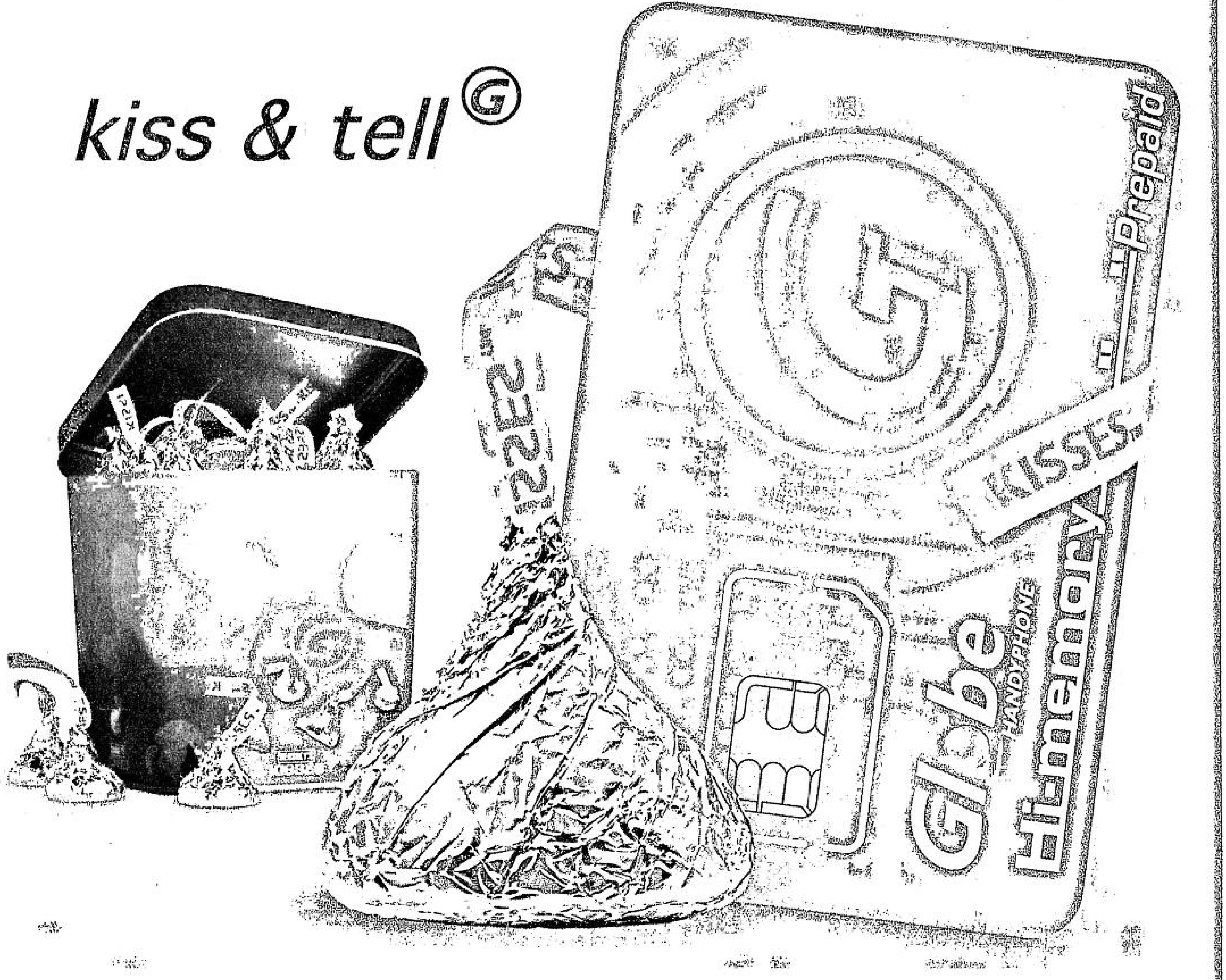

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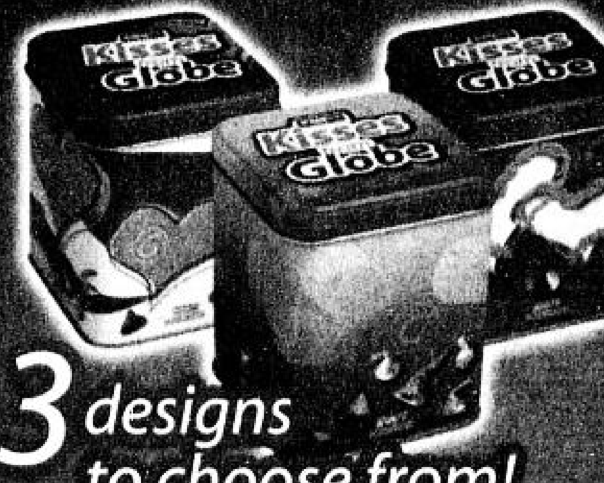

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SATURDAY Special

Cameras set to roll on Mandela film bio

JOHANNESBURG—A South African producer is to turn the story of Nelson Mandela into a big screen epic capturing his life from childhood to political awareness, 10,000 days of imprisonment and finally freedom.

Daunting

"It's a very prestigious project, but also a very daunting task. Everybody feels—and rightly so—about Mr. Mandela and his life. People take possession of it," producer Anant Singh told AFP.

"When you have to make a movie out of his life in under three hours, it's not easy."

Mandela became the international symbol of resistance to the apartheid system in South Africa. His release after 27 years in jail and eventual transition to the country's first post-apartheid president from 1994 to 1999 is almost the stuff of fairy tales.

The film will be based on his autobiography, "Long Walk to Freedom," which carries an emotive account of his first moments of freedom, likely to be at the heart of the new movie.

"I felt—even at the age of 71—that my life was beginning anew. My ten thousand days of imprisonment were at last over," Mandela, now 84, wrote in his book.

Crowd

"When I was among the crowd, I raised my right fist, and there was a roar. I had not been able to do that for 27 years and it gave me a surge of strength and joy."

Veteran actor Morgan Freeman has won the role of portraying the man who became for many a modern hero, and has acknowledged it is a daunting task.

"I'm honored and terrified that I won't live up to the job of really presenting this man," he said.

Scriptwriter William Nicholson, who also worked on "Sarafina!," "Gladiator" and "Shadowlands," has adapted "Long Walk to Freedom" into a screenplay to be directed by Indian filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, who made his name with "Elizabeth," "Bandit Queen" and "The Four Feathers." Kapur told a Canadian newspaper that he initially turned the project down, but changed his mind after a trip to South Africa.

"Somebody had to take the responsibility. He (Mandela) is a sprititual hero like Ghandi, he does not need to fight a bloody battle to win," Kapur said.

Mandela has often been likened to Mahatma Gandhi, who led Indian peaceful resistance to British colonial rule of the sub-continent.

Mandela also believed in non-violent protest, and even after being jailed for 27 years, he welcomed his former jailors into the new "rainbow nation," describing white Afrikaners as "decent people misled by their leaders."

Three actors

"There are probably going to be three actors—Mandela as a child, as a teenager and then the young Mandela who comes to Joburg," Singh said.

"It may not be in a chronological order, but you would go back to his childhood because he was groomed as a royal lineage. You have to give that whole background including him growing up in Transkei."

Singh has produced or made 45 films in the last 15 years, including South Africa's most prevailing anti-apartheid films such as "Sarafina!" with Whoopi Goldberg and "Cry, the Beloved Country" with James Earl Jones and Richard Harris.

AFP

MORGAN Freeman (left) will play Nelson Mandela in an epic movie.

Alan Alda makes science interesting and fun for viewers

By Nestor U. Torre

ALDA. Alternative career as TV host.

WHAT do veteran stars do when it looks like their acting careers are just about over? Some slink back into anonymity, rue their fate, take to drink or drugs, get a total facelift, manage younger talents, parlay their erstwhile popularity into a meal ticket in an obscure Asian banana republic—etc!

Renewed glory

Thankfully, there are some senior stars like Alan Alda who cannily segue into an alternative career that cloaks them with renewed glory. Alda's gambit has been to host a very interesting science quest show aired Saturday mornings at 10 on the National Geographic Channel.

We've been watching Alda's program for some months now, and we appreciate its creative way of making the usually daunting topic of scientific advances both interesting and fun for viewers.

It does this by getting the best resource persons, gaining entry into state-of-the-art laboratories and, best of all, personalizing everything by often using Alda as a guinea pig for the experiements it features.

This is the show's ace over other science shows on the tube, because Alda is not just a celebrity and performer, he's also a very intelligent person who's genuinely interested in scientific achievements.

Additional step

He takes the additional step of showing how the occasionally abstruse experiments can make our lives better in the years to come. Viewers like this "applied" approach to science information and education, and Alda should be credited for instinctively knowing how to help them get over their aversion for "heavy" science.

In one of the best episodes of Alda's show, the hour-long program focused on robotics, and viewing it was like taking a crash course in the futuristic subject.

Viewers are familiar enough with robots that talk and walk, but Alda's show took the topic—and the robots—many steps forward. A major portion of the telecast concentrated on scientists' efforts to make robots resemble human beings, not just in their external functions, but also in more subtle activities like analyzing, "thinking" and "feeling."

Best feature

The best feature was on a soccer game played by two teams of—robots! Each team had its own computer program that made its players "know" when to execute specific moves designed to react instantly to where the ball was at any point in the game.

The feature was impressive because the game was so fast and fluid. It was true that the robots were merely following a computer program designed by their human makers, but once the game was on, the scientists stopped manipulating the robots, which had to act seemingly on their own in trying to defeat their opponents.

Complex undertaking

Other scientists experimenting with robots are trying to program "thinking" and "feeling" into them. This is a very complex undertaking that even Alda himself admitted is difficult to understand.

But a scientist he interviewed explained it this way: in a sense, the human being is also a machine, like a robot, so experiments are trying to determine the extent of their similarities, before admitting what is basically different.

In any case, all these experiments could end up teaching us more about the humans who make them than the robots that are the subjects of their experiments.

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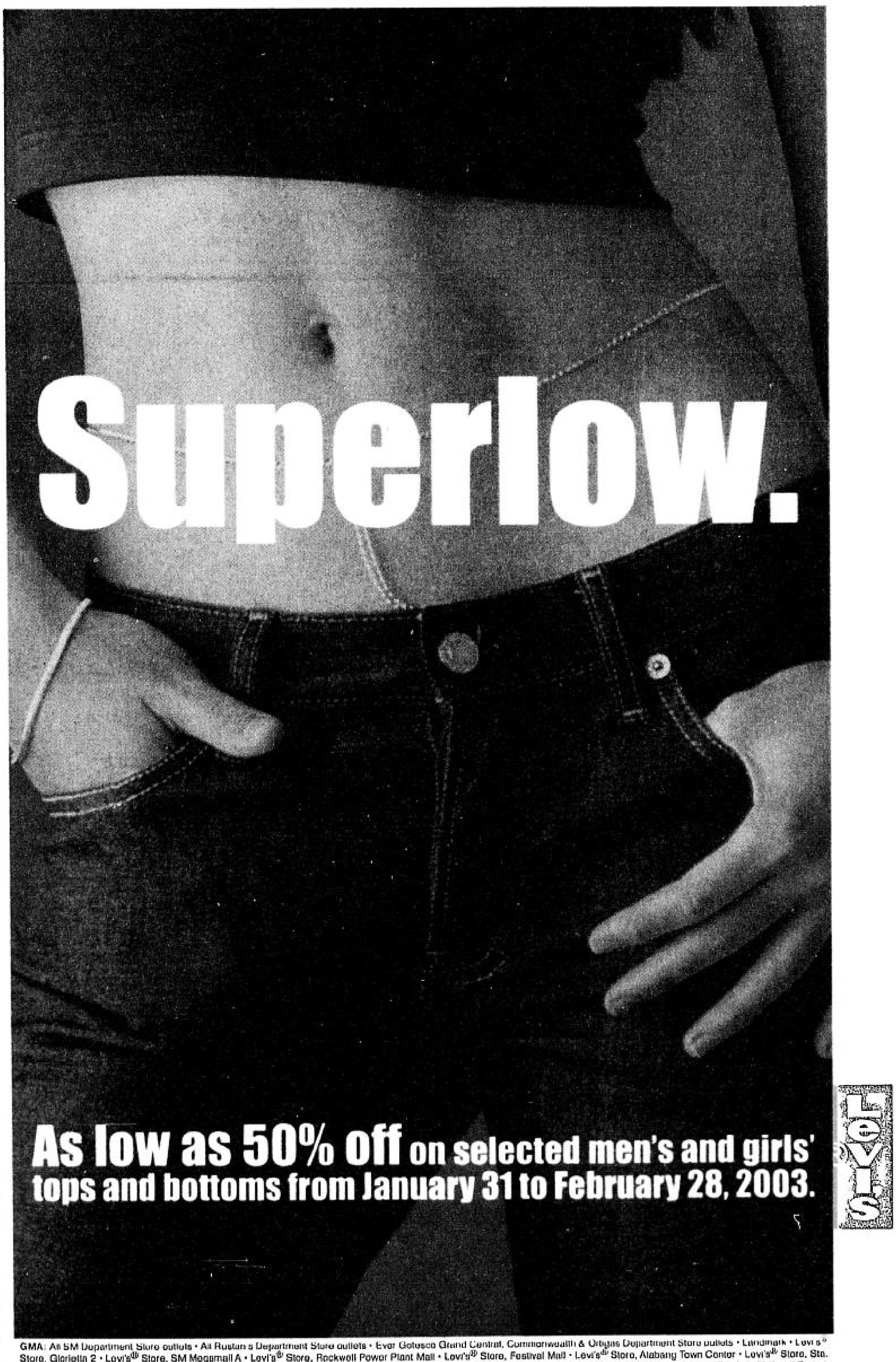
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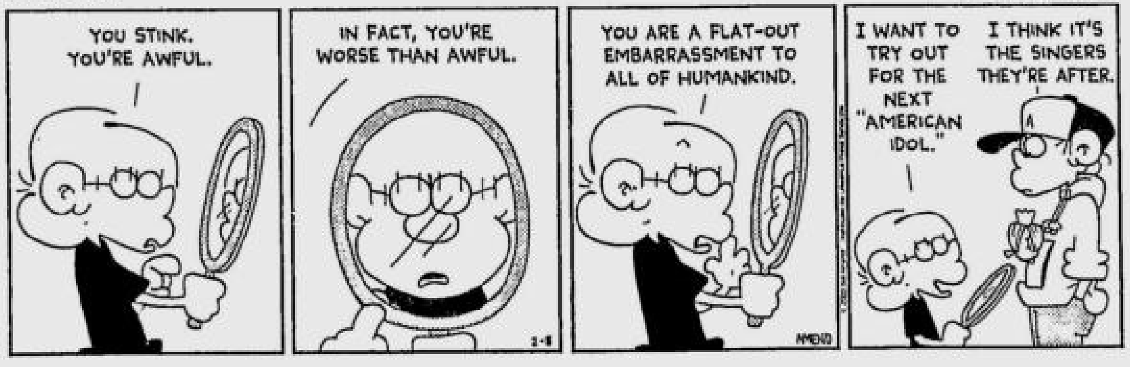
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

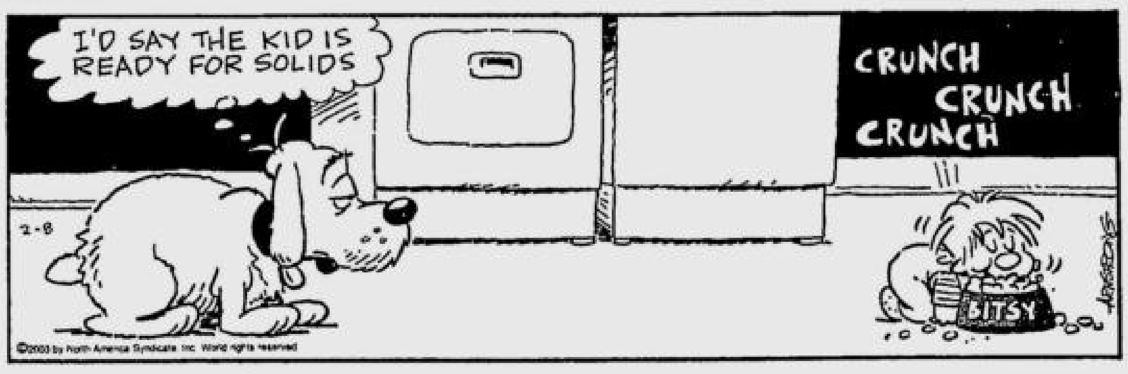
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


YOU STINK. YOU'RE AWFUL.
IN FACT, YOU'RE WORSE THAN AWFUL.
2-8
YOU ARE A FLAT-OUT EMBARRASSMENT TO ALL OF HUMANKIND.
AMEND
I WANT TO TRY OUT FOR THE NEXT "AMERICAN IDOL."
I THINK IT'S THE SINGERS THEY'RE AFTER.

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'D SAY THE KID IS READY FOR SOLIDS
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
BITSY
2-8
ARMSTRONG
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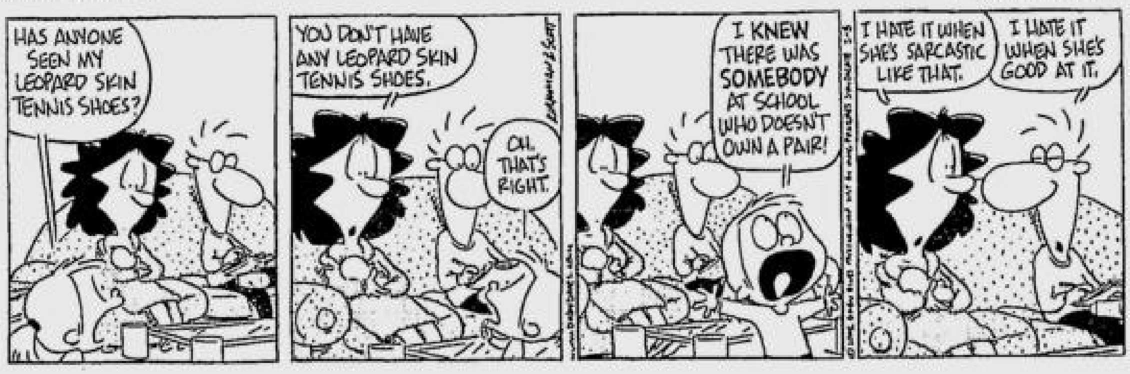
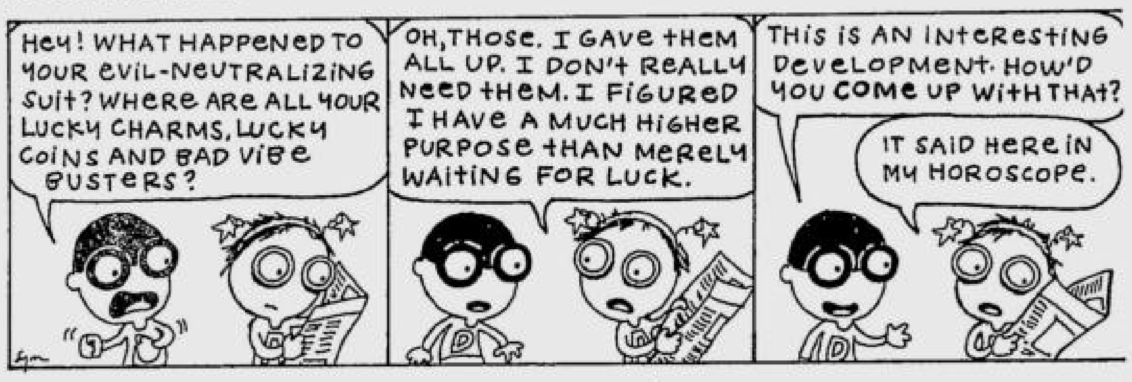
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HAS ANYONE SEEN MY LEOPARD SKIN TENNIS SHOES?
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY LEOPARD SKIN TENNIS SHOES.
OH. THAT'S RIGHT.
I KNEW THERE WAS SOMEBODY AT SCHOOL WHO DOESN'T OWN A PAIR!
I HATE IT WHEN SHE'S SARCASTIC LIKE THAT.
I HATE IT WHEN SHE'S GOOD AT IT.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BYLYRA GARCELLANO


Hey! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR EVIL-NEUTRALIZING SUIT? WHERE ARE ALL YOUR LUCKY CHARMS, LUCKY COINS AND BAD VIBE BUSTERS?
OH, THOSE. I GAVE THEM ALL UP. I DON'T REALLY NEED THEM. I FIGURED I HAVE A MUCH HIGHER PURPOSE THAN MERELY WAITING FOR LUCK.
THIS IS AN INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT. HOW'D YOU COME UP WITH THAT?
IT SAID HERE IN MY HOROSCOPE.

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ted Koppel, Jack Lemmon, Mary Steenburgen, Nick Nolte
Happy Birthday: Your popularity will grow this year, and you will be able to use your charisma to accomplish your goals. Exhaustion may be a problem, so set your priorities. Focus, with optimism in your heart. Your numbers are 20, 25, 27, 34, 39, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Make changes to the important proposal you have been working on. Your attention to detail will pay off. You may run into a past acquaintance when attending an event.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Valuable knowledge can be acquired if you listen to what someone with experience has to say. Make your decisions based on research, intuition and hard facts.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You may have to rely on money that you had put away for an unexpected expense. Deal with issues that have been holding you back. Tie up loose ends so that you can make a new start.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): This is not the day to give in to someone else's needs or wants, especially if what this person desires does not sit well with you. Instead, participate in those activities that energize you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't expect things to run smoothly today and you will be alert and ready to deal with whatever comes your way. Get your own work up to date, and don't worry too much about what others are doing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Get in touch with someone you haven't seen for a long time and you'll gain some interesting information that will help you make an important decision. Added knowledge will open up new doors for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You should be involved in activities that will promote romance. Don't expect everyone at work to be on your side if a debate arises. You must be discriminating.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): The people around you will be enthusiastic, but not necessarily concerning the same things that you're interested in. Do your own thing and don't push your wants onto others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Sit down and make a list of the things that you need to change in your life. Believe in yourself and don't be afraid to follow your dreams.

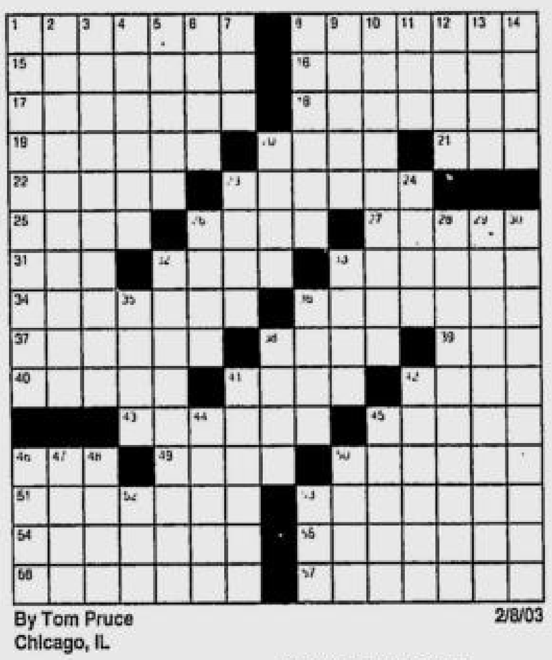
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Proceed with the changes you've been contemplating. Conjure up a new image that will help you present your goals with greater impact.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You don't want to get stuck doing jobs that someone else should be doing, so lay low today. Avoid distractions, stay focused on what you have to do and let others fend for themselves.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): This can turn into a great day if you do what you enjoy the most. The time you take for yourself will energize you and inspire you to do something new and exciting.

Birthday Baby: You will be creative and captivating. You will romanticize about everything and everyone. You will bring life and joy to others with your carefree attitude and high-spirited nature.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

2/8/03

ACROSS
1 General reference book
8 Takeoffs
15 Vote in an incumbent
16 Get the lead out!
17 Red dye plants
18 Missouri tribe
19 City in northern Spain
20 Electronic junk mail
21 __ compos mentis
22 Raises
23 Teeter-totter
25 Consumes
26 Ran in the wash
27 Indian prince
31 Half of MCII
32 Full wheelbarrow
33 Karl or Moses
34 Dry ice, e.g.
36 Choral and instrumental composition
37 Sorenstam of the LPGA
38 Carpentry tools
39 "...__ gloom of night..."
40 Observe again
41 Writes a scathing review
42 Isle of Man man
43 Gibraltar passage
45 Singer Lopez
46 Natl. TV network
49 Tear apart
50 Cowardly
51 Settle through compromise
53 Credulity
54 Rid of parasites
55 Camus and Finney
56 Slapped
57 Sanctifies

DOWN
1 Fortified vehicle
2 Ignore
3 Interventions
4 Choice woods for carvers
5 Requires
6 Height: pref.
7 Percentages of a $
8 Formed
9 Invisible emanations
10 Sailboats with three hulls
11 Irritate
12 Strikeout ace Nolan
13 Continental prefix
14 Extend across
20 Burpee kernel
23 Venetian blind strip
24 Kelly or Whitman
26 __ fide
28 "Enter Talking" writer
29 __ Perry Awards
30 Sincere warmth
32 Freshwater food fish
33 Carnivores' mouths
35 Prevarications
36 Isn't able to
38 Spoke
41 Breathed in short gasps
42 Atlanta ballplayers
44 Employ again
45 Clan
46 Helpful hints
47 Concoct
48 Coke or Pepsi
50 Ring on the telephone
52 __ on your life!
53 Put a collar on

Friday's Puzzle Solved

T	O	E	■	B	O	W	M	A	N	■	A	L	T	O
O	D	D	■	O	R	I	O	L	E	■	M	A	R	K
M	O	W	■	N	A	P	O	L	E	O	N	I	I	I
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■	■	■	R	O	L	L	S	■	D	I	B	S	■	■
S	Y	D	N	E	Y	■	D	I	E	S	I	R	A	E
H	A	V	E	S	■	A	R	T	S	■	A	I	D	S
E	L	I	■	S	A	D	I	S	T	S	■	C	I	T
A	T	I	T	■	N	A	V	Y	■	T	A	H	O	E
F	A	I	R	G	A	M	E	■	D	E	B	A	S	E
■	■	■	I	L	L	S	■	S	E	R	E	R	■	■
S	P	A	C	E	Y	■	E	N	F	O	L	D	E	D
A	L	F	O	N	S	O	X	I	I	I	■	I	R	E
N	E	A	R	■	T	O	P	P	E	D	■	I	S	M
D	A	R	N	■	S	H	O	E	R	S	■	I	T	O

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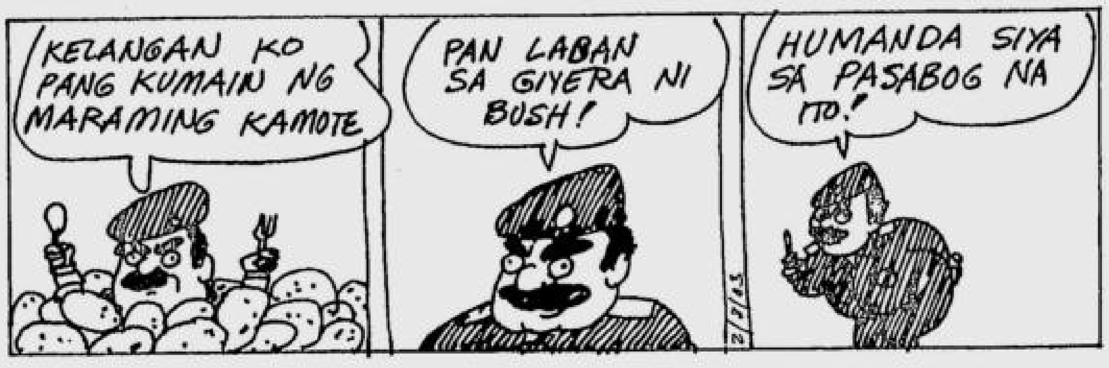
2/8/03

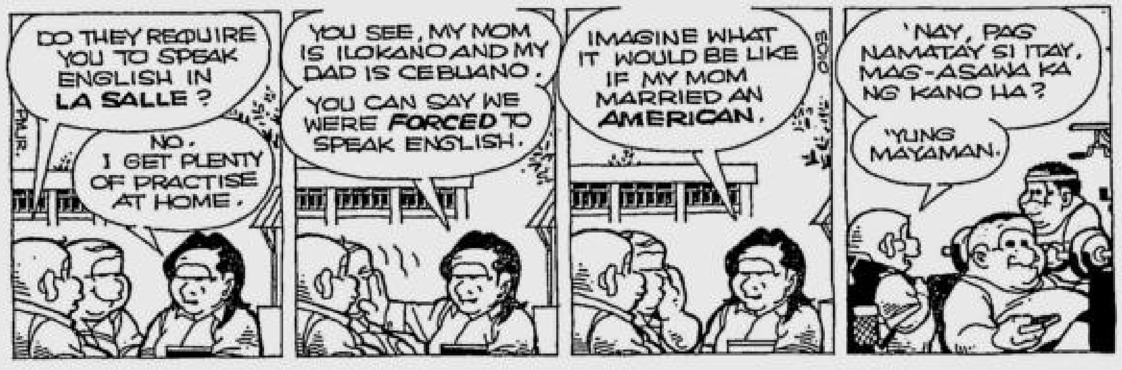
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KELANGAN KO PANG KUMAIN NG MARAMING KAMOTE
PAN LABAN SA GIYERA NI BUSH!
2/8/03
HUMANDA SIYA SA PASABOG NA ITO!

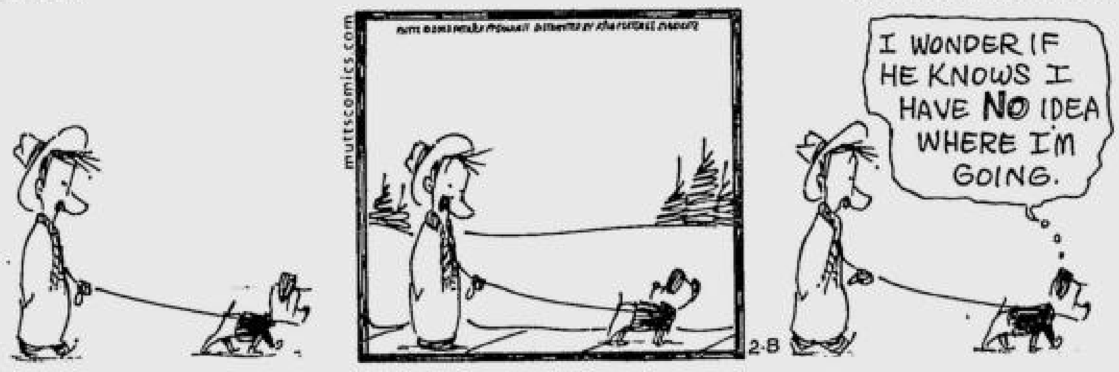
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DO THEY REQUIRE YOU TO SPEAK ENGLISH IN LA SALLE?
NO. I GET PLENTY OF PRACTISE AT HOME.
YOU SEE, MY MOM IS ILOKANO AND MY DAD IS CEBUANO.
YOU CAN SAY WE WERE FORCED TO SPEAK ENGLISH.
IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE IF MY MOM MARRIED AN AMERICAN.
'NAY, PAG NAMATAY SI ITAY, MAG-ASAWA KA NG KANO HA?
'YUNG MAYAMAN.

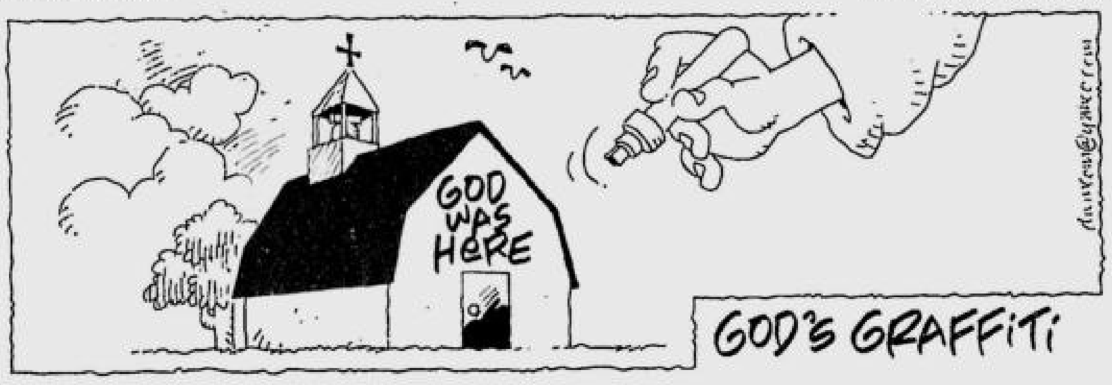
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


muttscomics.com
I WONDER IF HE KNOWS I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE I'M GOING.
2-8

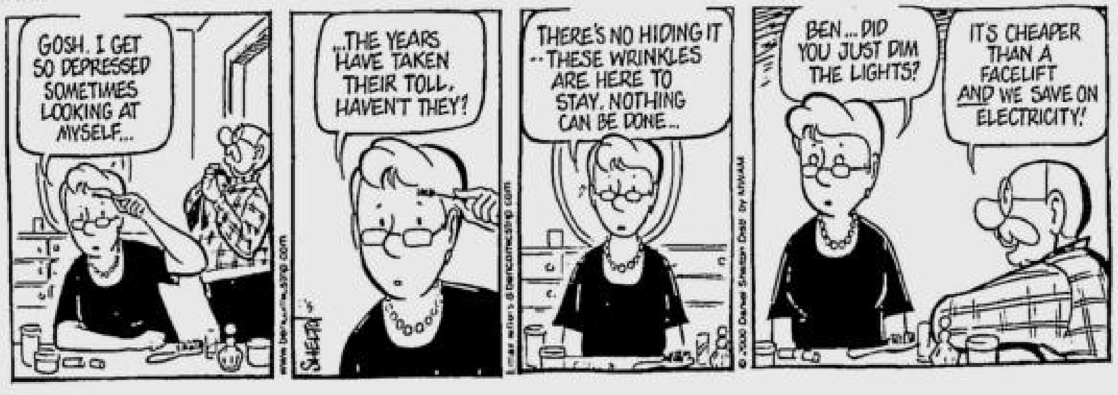
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


GOD WAS HERE
GOD'S GRAFFITI

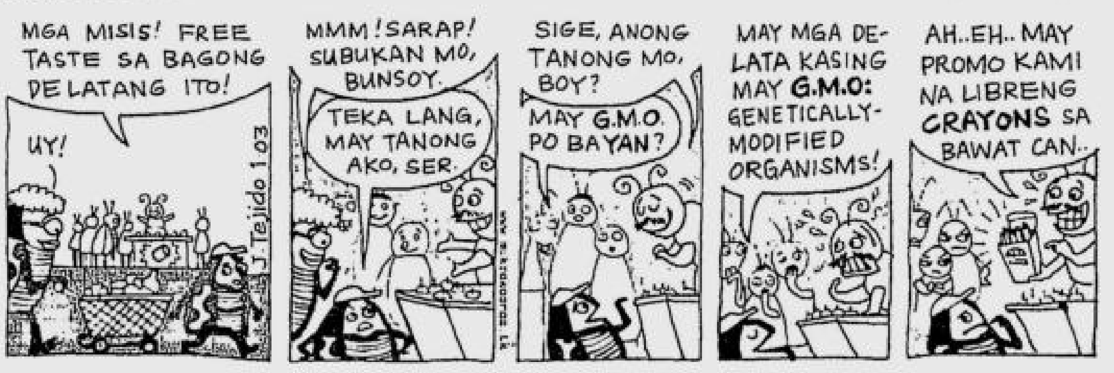
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GOSH. I GET SO DEPRESSED SOMETIMES LOOKING AT MYSELF...
...THE YEARS HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL, HAVEN'T THEY?
THERE'S NO HIDING IT -- THESE WRINKLES ARE HERE TO STAY. NOTHING CAN BE DONE...
BEN... DID YOU JUST DIM THE LIGHTS?
ITS CHEAPER THAN A FACELIFT AND WE SAVE ON ELECTRICITY!

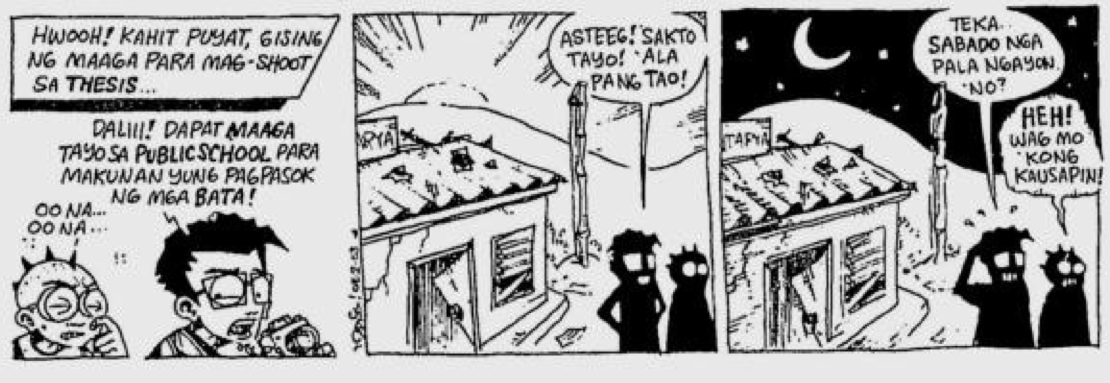
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MGA MISIS! FREE TASTE SA BAGONG DELATANG ITO!
UY!
J. Tejido 1 03
MMM! SARAP! SUBUKAN MO, BUNSOY.
TEKA LANG, MAY TANONG AKO, SER.
SIGE, ANONG TANONG MO, BOY?
MAY G.M.O. PO BA YAN?
MAY MGA DELATA KASING MAY G.M.O: GENETICALLY-MODIFIED ORGANISMS!
AH..EH.. MAY PROMO KAMI NA LIBRENG CRAYONS SA BAWAT CAN..

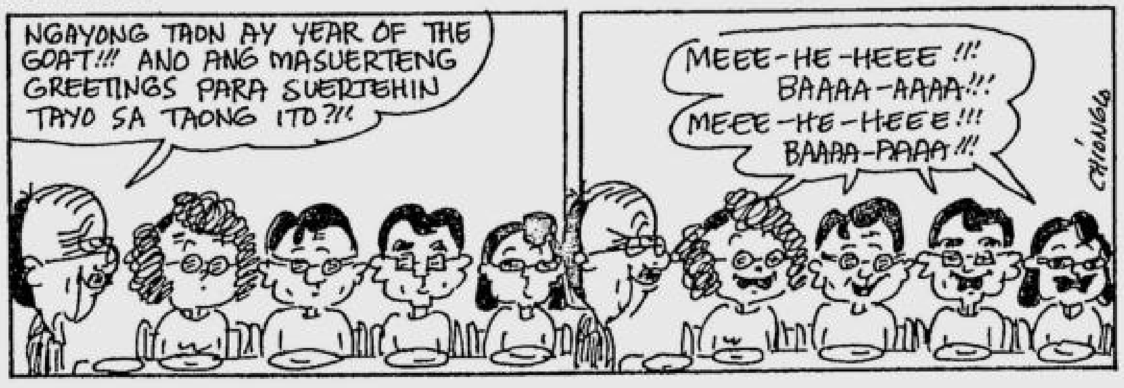
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! KAHIT PUYAT, GISING NG MAAGA PARA MAG-SHOOT SA THESIS...
DALIII! DAPAT MAAGA TAYO SA PUBLIC SCHOOL PARA MAKUNAN YUNG PAGPASOK NG MGA BATA!
OO NA... OO NA...
ASTEEG! SAKTO TAYO! 'ALA PANG TAO!
TEKA. SABADO NGA PALA NGAYON, 'NO?
HEH! WAG MO KONG KAUSAPIN!

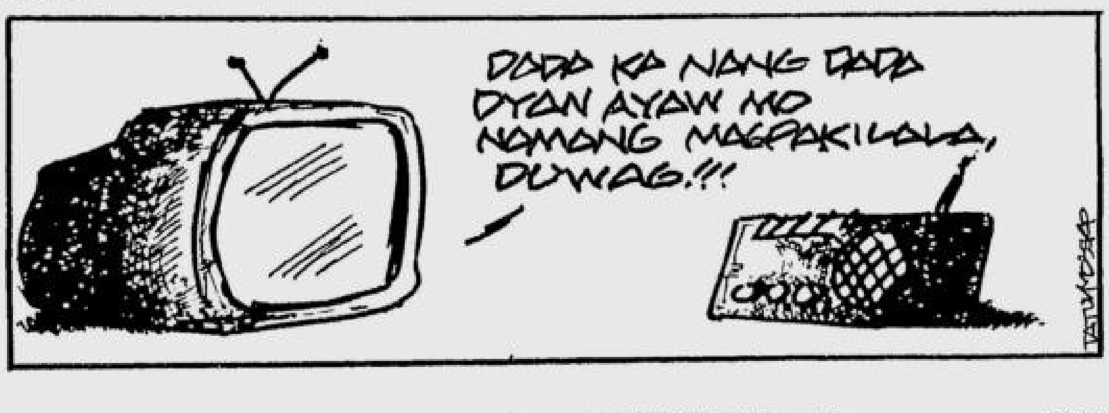
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NGAYONG TAON AY YEAR OF THE GOAT!!! ANO ANG MASUERTENG GREETINGS PARA SUERTEHIN TAYO SA TAONG ITO?!!
MEEE-HE-HEEE!!! BAAAA-AAAA!!! MEEE-HE-HEEE!!! BAAAA-AAAA!!!
CHIONGLO

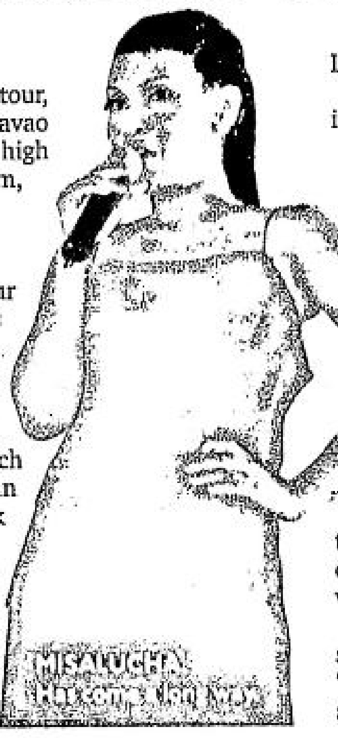
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DADA KA NANG DADA DYAN AYAW MO NAMANG MAGPAKILALA, DUWAG!!!
TATUMDRAP

Lani Misalucha ends Crossover tour tonight

By Edmund L. Sicam


MISALUCHA: [illegible]

LANI Misalucha's "Crossover Live" tour, which brought her to Bacolod, Cebu, Davao and San Fernando, Pampanga, ends on a high note tonight at 8 at the Araneta Colisuem, with Ai Ai delas Alas as special guest.

Davao City

I caught the Davao City leg of the tour and was amazed at how much Lani has grown since she started out five years ago. She was quite comfortable with her spiels, unlike a few years ago when she sounded like she didn't know her lines. She had widened her repertoire, which ranged from the operatic aria "Nessun Dorma" to the "Catsup Song" and a rock favorite, "Laklak."

Of course, "Loving You," her signature song, was still there, but she only used it as an intro to a medley, as well as a way of thanking the show's sponsors. Ditto for her "Diva Medley" where she impersonates singers like Regine Velasquez, Sharon Cuneta, Zsa Zsa Padilla and Jaya.

The crowd that watched her sell-out show at the Central Bank auditorium was highly appreciative and applauded enthusiastically after every number.

After the show, I told Lani that this was her best performance so far and she kidded me that this was the only show I had seen. I said no because I had caught three of her previous concerts.

Unaffected

That's what's impressive about Lani: Despite her success in the music scene, she has remained unaffected. She has also stayed away from controversy. Onstage, Lani is the essential diva. When the lights fade out and she has removed her makeup, she's once again the traditional mom and housewife.

I kidded her that with her stature in the industry, I wouldn't mind if she was a bit swellheaded. Lani laughed and replied, "I don't want to get to that point where I become bitchy and behave like a spoiled brat. I don't want to veer away from the path I've taken."

I tried to disturb her equanimity by saying, "You're at a point where you don't need Ronnie Henares to manage your career. Don't you want to go on your own, like Regine Velasquez? Imagine, you don't need to deduct his commission from your talent fee!"

Lani laughed out loud, especially when it got to the commission part. "Not that I deserve a loyalty award but Ronnie has done a lot for me. Unlike Regine, who's been in the business for 17 years, *hindi ko alam ang pasikut-sikot ng* business *na ito*."

"Doesn't your husband Noli want to manage your career?" I shot back.

"Even if he volunteers, *di ako papayag*," Lani retorted.

"What's wrong with your husband managing you?"

Lani replied, "*Magkasama na kami sa bahay, magkasama pa sa trabaho?*" Even in her current provincial tour, Noli was only present at her Davao concert.

Later, Ronnie joined us at the table and I remarked that he should be commended for producing the top two singers in the industry, Regine and Lani. "I didn't produce them," he humbly replied. "I merely helped them develop their talent."

Receptive

Of Lani, Ronnie said that she was very receptive to suggestions on how to improve her career. He commented that Lani never sings a song the same way. "She's always striving for perfection."

I observed that Lani's only weak point is that she doesn't have a hit song like Aiza Seguerra's "Pagdating sa Panahon." In fact, it was this hit song that revived Aiza's moribund career.

Ronnie put a positive spin to that by saying that Lani has managed to succeed in the music industry despite the absence of a hit album. Lani is working on a new album now and she's hoping that she'll finally have a hit on her hands.

Another thing impressed me about Lani: When I asked her about "Nessun Dorma," she was able to tell me which opera it came from and what the song was all about. That meant she had really researched on the aria so she could give justice to her interpretation of the song.

I also marveled at her generosity. Her concert was a physically-exhausting experience but she still had the energy to give an interview. Later, the band at Venue requested her to come onstage and she gladly sang two numbers with the same intensity as her paid performances, to the delight of the audience.

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Helping other people change for the better

SOMEONE once told Jagad Guru, "I get agitated and bummed out whenever I see my spouse committing so many mistakes. She has so many shortcomings and faults that really disturb me and make me angry. What should I do?"

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

Mistakes

He replied, "When you see a child falling and tripping every time she tries to walk, do you get angry? When you see a person committing mistakes, do you get bummed out by him? A lover of God does not get angry with people who are having difficulties in life. Instead, he feels compassion for them and tries to help them ."

Another time, Jagad Guru gave this advice: "You already know that people are imperfect. Why should you be so upset with them? Why don't you try to be compassionate and instead help them change?"

More often than not, we try to rationalize why we are bitter, agitated and angry with certain people. We list down their faults and justify why we are nasty towards them. We don't blame ourselves for our feelings of anger.

In fact, by nurturing our anger, we suffer more than others. As Jagad Guru puts it, "Anger hurts you more than anyone else."

Immature

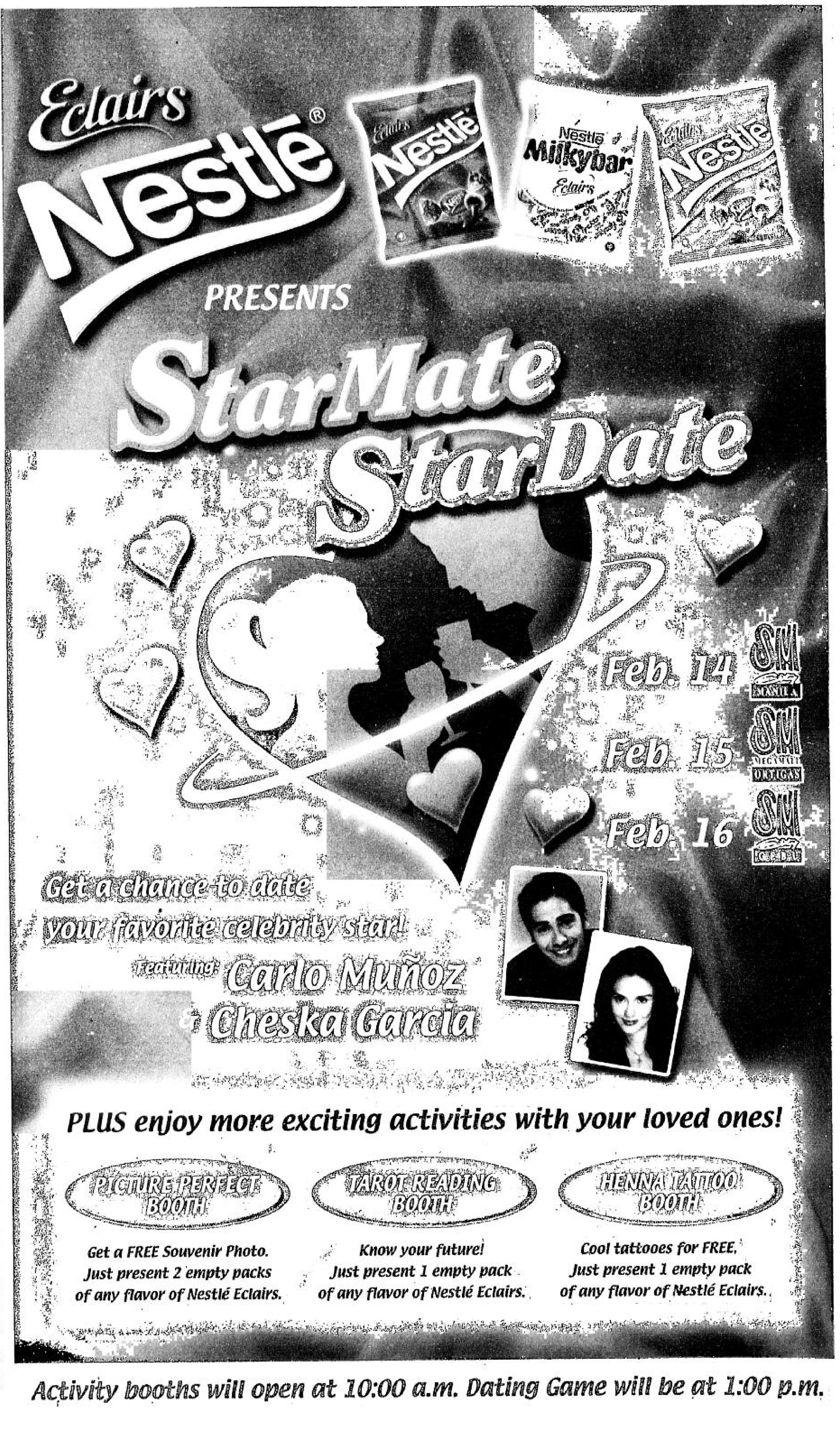
If we want to attain peace and happiness, we must perceive reality as it is. When people are immature and weak, they need help. Instead of ridiculing them, we should offer wisdom so that they will change for the better.

They must realize that a strong spiritual foundation is what will help them weather all the miseries of the material world.

It is not that difficult to be kind or compassionate. We can learn from the simple example of innocent youths. There was once a race for disabled young people and the contestants eagerly dashed for the finish line. However, one young child suddenly tripped and fell. Another contestant saw his fallen comrade and he stopped and went back to assist him.

Pretty soon, all the other racers did the same and they all raced to the finish line together—hand in hand, heart to heart, bound by compassion and love.

Email Lotuspond108@hotmail.com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HE SAID, SHE SAID

Memorable lines from famous movies remembered

By Behn Cervantes

TODAY, let's recall some of the most memorable lines from movies that are often quoted by film fans:

From the all-time blockbuster "Titanic": the brash young hero about to conquer the world, win the love of a wealthy damsel and pooh-pooh Victorian morality and snobbery shouts to the winds, "I'm the king of the world!"

Confidence

The same confidence is expressed by blasé Dirty Harry in his screen adventures. Grim-faced Clint Eastwood as the glum detective facing a menacing villain challenges the goon, "Go ahead, make my day!" The firm determination sends shivers of fear down the villain's spine, while thrilled underdogs in the audience cheer with joy.

Another rock-faced superstar, Arnold Schwarzenegger, makes a promise that gives hope to good people and is a threat to the wicked: In "Terminator I" and "Terminator II" he vows, "I'll be back!" Indeed he will, since "Terminator III" is about to be shown!

You can bet your bottom peso that, somewhere in that sequel, Arnold will once more state his signature intention with his thick Austrian accent.

Terror

Freddie Kruger, the scary creature in "Nightmare on Elm Street," thrills the audience despite the terror elicited by his maniacal announcement, "I'm baaaack!"

Thankfully, film characters don't only make threats, they also express positive emotions. So, the little fellow Tobey Maguire who becomes "Spiderman" reminds the adult world and his many impressionable young fans, "With great power comes great responsibility." However, sensitive, young Haley Joel Osment in "The Sixth Sense" confirms the sneaky suspicion: "I see dead people."

Life is one big, unpredictable mystery, so Nora Aunor screams, "*Walang himala!*" And the great Swedish actress Greta Garbo demanded space because "I want to be alone."

Chancing upon a longtime pianist-friend, Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) tells him, "Play it, Sam." The song "As Time Goes By" is played, reminding one and all of her past love for Rick (Humphrey Bogart). The song pains him, but upon learning of her reasons for standing him up on that fateful Parisienne day, he toasts to her with "Here's looking at you, kid."

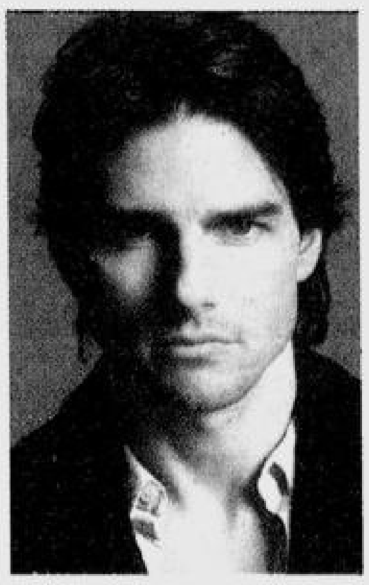
Determined

Remember the bedraggled but determined Scarlet O'Hara (Vivien Leigh) swearing, "I'll never go hungry again"? The willful Southern beauty couldn't decide between her puppy love Ashley (Leslie Howard) and her husband Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) but, in the end, Gable leaves her. He informs the confused and now contrite Scarlett, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

The reverse of that tart reply is the sweet, saccharine exchange in "Ghost": When Demi Moore confessed to handsome Patrick Swayze, "I love you. I really love you," Swayze answered, without skipping a beat, "Ditto."

In "Jerry Maguire," when Tom Cruise told Renee Zellweger, "You complete me," Renee replied, "You had me at 'Hello!'"

With such love and sweetness going around, no wonder Tom Hanks joyously exclaimed for all of us to remember, "Life is like a box of chocolates!" And they're pretty yummy, too, like these and other memorable lines from the movies.


CRUISE: "You complete me."

ZELLWEGGER: "You had me at 'Hello'!"

Vietnamese sandwich rediscovered

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

I FIRST came across the special sandwich in Paris' Chinatown as I was doing the marketing for Aux Iles Philippines, our Philippine restaurant in the city of lights. There was a long cue of hungry diners waiting to be served in a tiny Vienamese food stall.

I joined the line. At the end of it was one of the most unique sandwiches I have ever tried. This has come to be known as the Vietnamese sandwich. I never encountered it after that, until last year.

Today, in Saigon Town in Los Angeles and some Vietnamese restaurants in Vancouver, this item has become part of the menu.

After getting close enough to observe how this sandwich is assembled, I now know how it is made and what goes into it:

Colony

You start off with Vietnamese bread. Vietnam was once a colony of France. The result of this French influence on this Asian country was the creation of its famous bread. It is similar to a French baguette, but even better.

It is crunchy and chewy. On this toasted *pain*, liver pate and mayonnaise are wiped on both sides. They then add Vietnamese ham, bacon and meat loaf, then slices of spring onion, cucumber and chili pepper. Finally, they stuff the sandwich with pickled and shredded *labanos* and carrots, add a sprig of cilantro and seal it with what looks like *patis* or seasoning sauce.

This over-stuffed sandwich creates a variety of flavors on the first bite. It is also a bit spicy, so it will make your nose perspire. One can have the chili removed if you don't want it spicy.

Source

At first, I thought the only place we could experience this was in Palawan, where we have Vietnamese settlers. *Mali!* Chef Rox recently broke his silence and told me the source of his Vietnamese bread: a Vietnamese restaurant in Quezon City. I tried it last week.

Saigon Best is a fairly new dining place on Matalino st. in Diliman. The good sandwiches there are: Banh Mi Thit—pork and meat loaf sandwich with all the fillings. Banh Mi Ga Nhong, or chicken sandwich, is also good. I love their Goi Ga, chicken salad. The broth of the soups was also tasty, so I suppose the Phos or noodles are also worth trying.

The place is owned by Alex Hua, from Toronto, Canada. Prices are very affordable. I suggest you ask Alex to make you a special sandwich with more stuffing, which might cost a bit more, but I'm sure you will enjoy it. I have turned many people on to this new and unique sandwich. Result—97 percent love it!

Happy eating!

Saigon Best is located at 34-E. Matalino st., Diliman, QC. Tel. no. 433-6160. Drive along East ave. in Q.C., turn to the street of Sulo Hotel, that's Matalino st. It'll be on your right before you reach Kalayaan ave.

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Michael Jackson discusses his troubled life

JACKSON. Revealing interview. AP

By Jill Lawless

LONDON—A revealing and unsettling documentary in which Michael Jackson revealed that he sometimes lets children sleep in his bed unleashed a torrent of sharply divided opinion about the reclusive King of Pop.

Deep love

Friends said Tuesday that the 90-minute program by British journalist Martin Bashir showed a troubled but innocent genius with a deep love of children.

But Britain's tabloid press pounced on the man they call "Wacko Jacko." The Sun said the "shocking confession" would end Jackson's career, while the Daily Express said Jackson "faces a wave of revulsion."

In 1993, Jackson—who says he identifies with Peter Pan and lives on a ranch called Neverland—was accused of molesting a boy who had stayed at his home. He denied the allegations, and no charges were laid.

"I fully trust Michael, he is a pure, innocent human being, he brings so much joy to the lives of people," said psychic Uri Geller, a friend of Jackson, who said he helped set up the interview.

Honest

"I think Michael was brutally honest, he was direct, he never flinched from the most difficult questions," Geller told British Broadcasting Corp. radio.

In the interview, screened Monday night on British TV, Jackson faced tough questions about plastic surgery, his unhappy childhood, the child abuse allegations and the notorious baby-dangling incident.

The singer has a 5-year-old son, Prince Michael I, and 4-year-old daughter, Paris, born during his marriage to nurse Debbie Rowe, which ended in 1999. He also has an infant son, Prince Michael II, whose mother has been a mystery.

Jackson told Bashir that the baby was conceived by a surrogate mother whom he had never met.

Surrogate mother

"I used a surrogate mother and my own sperm cells. She doesn't know me and I don't know her," he said.

But at another point during "Living With Michael Jackson," Jackson said he had been in a relationship with the unidentified mother when the baby was conceived.

Jackson said his children had no contact with their mothers, and Prince told Bashir he did not have a mummy.

"She can't handle it . . . she'd prefer them to be with me than with her," Jackson said of Rowe. "She did it for me. She said, 'You need to be a daddy.'"

Jackson has routinely kept his children's heads covered while escorting them in public—for fear of kidnap attempts, he says—and they appeared in the program wearing masks. He often wears a surgical mask himself, although he shed it for the documentary.

Jackson denied having had any alterations to his face other than two operations on his nose because "it helped me breathe better so I can hit higher notes." *AP*

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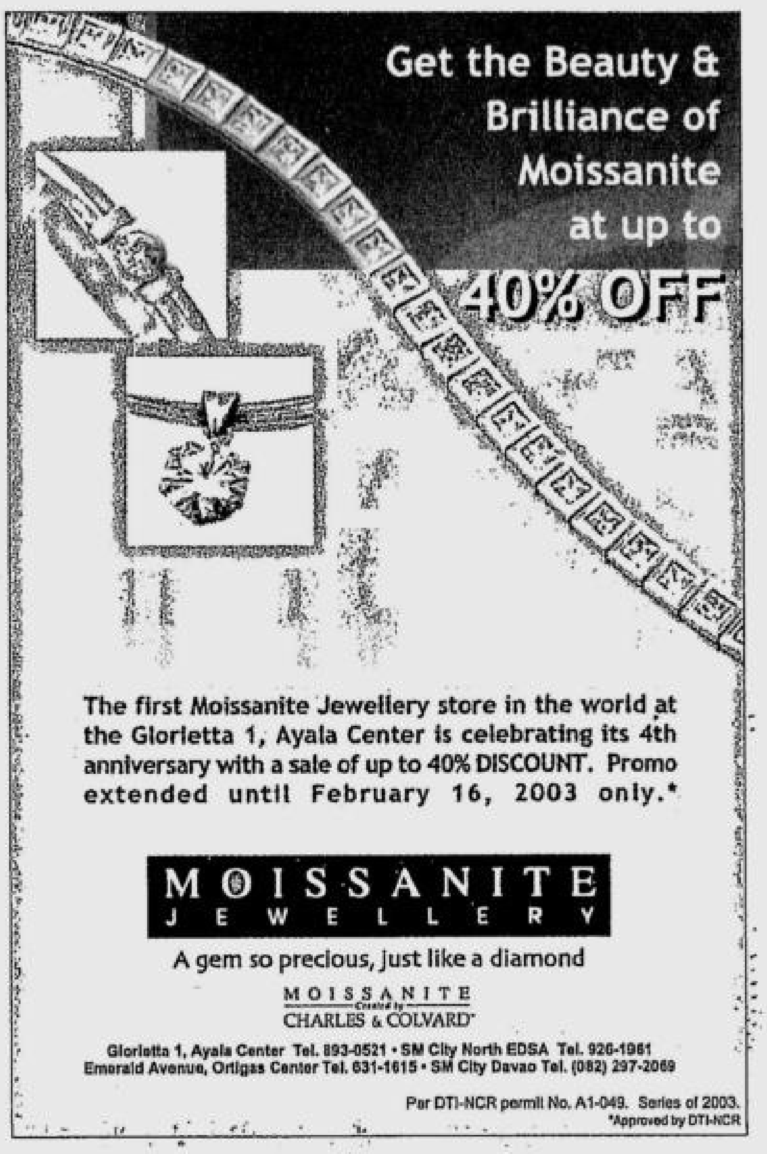

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Angelica and Carlo successfully balance studies and career

By Jocelyn Valle

CARLO Aquino vows not to fall in love with a costar. "*Nakaka-ilang kasi*," he explains. "*At saka paano 'pag nag-away kayo, tapos kailangan* sweet *kayo sa eksena*?"

Crush

Well, the 17-year-old actor who shone as Vilma Santos' questioning son in 1998's "Bata, Bata, Paano Ka Ginawa?" hasn't found a girlfriend yet. "*Hanggang* crush *pa lang*," he blushes. "*Ayaw ko kasing hanapin. Darating na lang 'yan.*"

But there's a special girl, and she's Carlo's costar in the *teleserye* "Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka"—Angelica Panganiban, 16. They began working closely together a few years ago in the defunct teen series "G-mik," as neighbors Jun-Jun and Jelai, whose friendship blossomed into romance.

They remain close to each other. On the set of "Sa Puso," they are inseparable, either chatting with each other or tinkering with their cell phones together. But Carlo still doesn't know if he'll break his rule for Angelica.

"*Baka kasi mawala ang* magic *ng* love team," he sighs. "As of now, friends *na lang muna*."

Anyway, both teen stars have so many things on their minds other than getting romantically involved. Their studies, for instance.

First year

Carlo is in his first year at the UP College of Music. He wants to perfect playing the guitar and at the same time explore other aspects of music, like composition and orchestration.

He started strumming the guitar at age 10, due to the influence of a brother who's 11 years his senior. He honed his chops as the axeman of JCS, his old band with fellow ABS-CBN talents, John Prats and Stefano Mori.

Angelica, on the other hand, is graduating from high school at St. Vincent School in Quezon City on March 23. "I'm excited *pero nalulungkot din*," she pouts. "*So-brang* attached *kasi ako sa mga* friends *ko, at ang hirap mag*-let go."

AQUINO AND PANGANIBAN. Special friends.

She's taken the entrance examinations at UP and Miriam College, with the goal of majoring in Mass Communications. "I want to go to college right away *para hindi ako tamaring bumalik* if I take a break," she avers.

The former child star who made moviegoers cry as the servant Becky in "Sarah, Ang Munting Prinsesa" and as the adopted daughter of Maricel Soriano in "Ama, Ina, Anak" makes it clear, though, that she's not abandoning her acting career.

Positive

She's pretty positive that she'll be able to balance her studies and work, like she's done since she entered the biz nine years ago as one of the cute and precocious kids on "Ang TV."

Unlike most show biz teens who resort to a home-study program, Angelica studied in a regular school, where she felt accepted as she is. But she remembers working twice as hard as her classmates. While they would go straight home after school, Angelica had to go to a movie set or television studio to work, doing her homework between takes.

Carlo wanted to stick to his old school, though he was getting busier with his budding show biz career. At age seven, he was spotted by an agent for commercials at an LRT station. He got a job after his very first VTR. Then he appeared in "Kahapon, May Dalawang Bata" and on Channel 2's programs.

Difficulties

Sadly, he experienced some difficulties that made him enroll in ABS-CBN's Distance Learning School instead. "It's not very different from a regular school," he points out. "*Kailangan pa rin naming pumasok* (at the Talent Center building inside the network's compound) *at hindi* take-home *ang mga* exams *namin. Meron ding* interaction *kahit kaunti lang kami sa klase.*"

Though Carlo is in the cast of the Ai-Ai delas Alas starrer, "Tanging Ina," he doesn't know what the future holds for his career after "Sa Puso" ends late this month. Ditto for Angelica. But the talented and hardworking duo are hopeful that new career opportunities will present themselves—soonest!

Songs in new albums grow on listeners

By Mary Ann A. Bautista

Phantom Planet
The Guest
Sony Music

THE BAND members of Phantom Planet must have had pretty rough love lives. Each song is just a variation on self blame and thrashing women who never cared enough or gave them the time of day. But what makes this album enjoyable is its cool balance of pop, rock and funk.

Good track

"California" is a good track. Listening to it makes you want to drive around the city and enjoy the sunny atmosphere. It has recall and a sing-able melody. Never mind if they keep repeating the word, "California."

It's kind of irritating at first to hear songs that blame women, but the melodies are so engaging that you end up playing the whole album again. Shucks, this album has the ability to grow on you.

New angle

"Hey Now Girl" has a new angle on expectations and relationships. "Lonely Day" talks about karma and paying for "sins."

"In Our Darkest Hour" has a sad, melancholic feel, but its lyrics are not apologetic, smacking instead of resentment and bitterness.

"Wishing Well" aims to tug at a girl's heartstrings and sees guys as sensitive, lonely creatures. Anybody who has ever been dumped can relate to this song.

CHER. Gentle passion.

"One Ray of Sunlight" is laid-back, carefree, melodic and brilliant. It aims to please and is sincerely written.

"Nobody's Fault," "All Over Again," and "Something Is Wrong" can become favorites, too. But not until you've played them a couple of times.

Cher
Living Proof
Warner Music

This album advocates being saucy, strong and sexy without losing one's femininity. Sure, Cher has the usual pop sound but she also tries to weave a clear, strong message of faith, hope and love into each song.

Upbeat

"The Music's No Good Without You" is upbeat but Cher's voice gives it an exotic, sultry feel. It's packed with just the right amount of power without being overbearing.

"Alive Again" leaves you with a good feeling because it makes you believe in moving on and living again.

"A Song for the Lonely" has an upbeat melody but Cher infuses it with gentle passion and feeling. It's heartfelt but restrained.

"A Different Kind of Love Song" has an upbeat tempo but the lyrics have depth. The song encourages you to have a positive outlook in life.

Love gone sour

"Rain, Rain" speak of a love gone sour. But this isn't your usual mourning song. Cher remains optimistic that someday he'll come back to her even if all she sees is rain and sadness.

"Love So High" inspires and makes you believe that love can indeed go on forever. The melody is soothing but the lyrics are a bit mushy.

"Real Love" makes you remember the kind of devotion you give your loved one when you're at the peak of being in love.

If you're down in the dumps, this album can perk you up and help you get rid of the blues.

Thanks for the inspiration

By Nestor U. Torre

MUCH of what we see on television is depressing instead of inspiring. It sometimes looks like TV is interested in featuring only criminals, sexy starlets, crazy people, weirdos, and other negative types, while good people are regarded as boring and too good to be put on television.

Goodness

That's why we're happy when inspiring topics and interviewees somehow manage to get to the TV screen, and are given a chance to show that goodness needn't be the kiss of death on television.

Recently, we got an especially generous infusion of inspiration when Oprah Winfrey's show guested 10 people who were able to triumph over their handicaps and other limitations.

Leading Oprah's inspiring guests was 11-year-old Matty Stepanek, who described himself as a "poet and peacemaker." Matty and his three siblings were all stricken with muscular dystrophy, and he is now the only survivor.

Survival

His survival is deemed downright amazing because the illness is fatal to most of its victims who are stricken in early childhood.

Why has Matty beaten the odds? He attributes his survival to the love of his mother and friends, the great medical help he's been getting, plus "dreams and prayers."

WINFREY. Her show's upbeat features are appreciated by viewers.

As Oprah talked to Matty, many members of the studio audience were openly weeping, because his courage and goodness of heart touched them in a big way. But they were crying happy tears, because Matty's sterling example inspired them with the resiliency of the human spirit.

Aside from his being a brave survivor, Matty's strongest suit is his being a precociously insightful poet and philosopher.

Suffering

You ask: how can an 11-year-old be a philosopher? Well, Matty's grave illness and all the suffering that comes with it have made him wise beyond his years.

As poet and philosopher, Matty moved Oprah's audience with insightful statements like: "Life is wonderful, but even more wonderful is the journey that it entails—*that* is the real miracle."

"You are a champion not because of the trophies you have won, but because of the strength inside you."

"We don't need to be the same to keep from fighting. In fact, we need to be different, because that's where our individual contributions come from—and we don't need to fight."

Intensive care

It turns out that Matty was once so sick that he spent five whole months in intensive care! In fact, he was so close to death that, he recalls "I saw angels coming for me."

He's had only three wishes in his young life: to publish a book of poetry, to talk to former US president Jimmy Carter, and to guest on Oprah's show. Well, he's gotten all three wishes, but that doesn't mean that he's ready to die. In fact, he's determined to live as long as his illness will let him—and to live life to the fullest, from day to day!

During the inspiring interview, Oprah asked Matty how he was doing health-wise. Visibly thrilled at finally being able to talk to his favorite TV personality, Matty cracked, "I'm doing well health-wise—and really well excitement-wise!" Same here, Matty. Thanks for the inspiration!

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM FEB 8 – FEB 14

CH	2	4	5	7	9	13	23	29	31
[illegible]	5:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 7:00 Arriba, Arriba 8:30 Bida si Mister, Bida si Misis 9:30 FPJ Action Cinema 11:00 "F" 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 7:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 11:00 Business and Leisure	7:00 Sailormoon Sailor Stars 7:30 Family Feud 8:30 Wow Mali! 9:30 Saturday Night Specials 11:30 Star Trek Voyager	6:00 Dragon Ball Z 6:30 Imbestigador 7:30 Idol Ko Si Kap 8:30 Kakabakaba 9:30 Blockbuster Cinema *Basta't Ikaw Nanginginig Pa* 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Master Showman	6:00 Real TV 6:30 Entertainment Tonite 7:00 Largo 8:00 7 Days 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse *Phil. Parenting Conference*	7:00 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 8:00 Star For A Night 9:00 Viva Box Office 11:00 Kagat ng Dilim	6:00 Travel Time 6:30 The Beast Machines 7:00 Game Plan 7:30 7th Heaven 8:30 Boston Public 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:30 Reel Deal	7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras Ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling	5:30 CBS Evening News 6:00 E! News Weekend 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Russell Crowe* 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story *Karen Carpenter* 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Ibiza*
[illegible]	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Home Along Da Riles 9:30 Sunday Family Cinemas 11:30 Dong Puno Nightly 12:00 The Weekend News	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 11:00 Unlimited Driving	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guyferd 7:00 Price Is Right 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 The Big Night 11:00 Speed	5:30 Partners Mel & Jay 7:00 KI 8:30 Daddy Di Do Du 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Entertainment This Weekend 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 Match TV 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Nat'l Dance Competition* 11:00 Sunday Report	6:00 PBA Games 8:00 Sinemaks 9:30 Viva's Hot Hits 11:00 El Shaddai	6:00 Invasion America 6:30 Digital Tour 7:00 Exposed 8:00 Yes Dear 8:30 Just Shoot Me 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 The West Wing 10:30 Scariest Places on Earth 11:30 News Central	7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night movies	5:30 CBS Evening News 6:00 E! Original Specials *Critics Choice Awards* 8:00 Rank 9:00 Revealed w/ Jules Asner *Jennifer Lopez* 10:00 Movies on E! *Three Coins In the Fountain*
[illegible]	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Game K N B? 7:00 Bituin 7:30 Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay 8:00 Sa Puso ko, Iingatan Ka 8:30 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:00 Alias 10:30 Night Visions 11:00 Headlines	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 PBL	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 F 7:00 Mahha Go Go Go 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 Bugs 9:30 Trabaho Lang 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Two	6:00 Frontpage 6:40 Habang Kapiling Ka 7:20 Ang Ibigin Ay Ikaw 8:00 Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:40 Kung Mawawala Ka 9:20 Magpakailanman 10:30 Saksi 11:00 I-Witness.	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Wyred 6:30 Hot Ticket 7:00 Simpsons 8:00 Jag 9:00 24 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sex & the City	6:00 PBA Games 9:00 The Weakest Link 10:00 IBC News 11:00 Ronda Trese	6:00 The Three Stooges 6:30 Voltron:3rd Dimension 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Bully 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan	6:00 E! News Live 7:00 Behind The Scenes *Never Been Kissed* 7:30 Mysteries & Scandals 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 E! News Live 10:00 Best of Late Show 11:00 Wild On *Hawaiian Islands*
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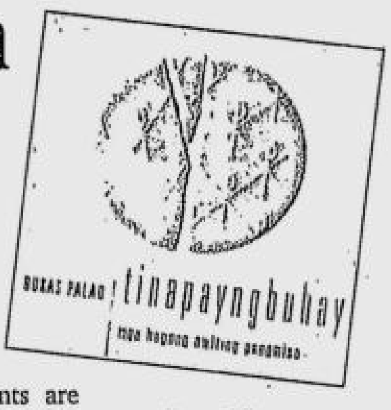
More songs that inspire and sustain faith

By Noelani Torre

THEY are the people responsible for many of the songs we now hear in church. Songs that we feel reflect the heart of the modern-day Filipino Christian's faith. They are the Bukas Palad Music Ministry, a group composed of musically talented young people who believe that music can inspire and sustain faith.



BUKAS Palad returns to its roots with its latest album.

Friendship

Formed 17 years ago, the group grew from the friendship of three individuals: Norman Agatep, Jandi Arboleda, and Manoling Francisco, SJ. Schoolmates at the Ateneo de Manila high school, they composed songs for the school's masses. In 1986, they released their first album, "Bukas Palad," after which the developing group eventually named itself.

They have performed in various provinces across the country, as well as at the Pundaquit Music Festival, the First Makati Arts Festival, Meralco Theater (with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra), "Puerta Real Presents," and "Ryan Ryan Musikahan."

Now, they have several more recordings to their name: "Pasko Na!" (1987), "Tanging Yaman" (1989), "Balang Araw" (1992), "In Him Alone" (1995), and "All Shall Be Well" (2002). They have also produced a two-volume album, "The Best of Bukas Palad."

Most recent release

"Tinapay ng Buhay" is their most recent release, and here they return to their roots. "These songs renew our commitment to contribute to Filipino liturgy," they say, "and invite us to return to the Eucharist, to Jesus, the Bread of Life who fills the hunger of the world." Hence the album's title, "Tinapay ng Buhay."

We find their reason for producing this album commendable: "Our aim is not that people listen to Masses sung by cantors and choirs," they tell us in the CD inlay, "but for entire congregations to sing the Mass as one community, one body."

This is something that doesn't often happen in masses, where members of the congregation often do not know, or cannot master, the words or the melody to a song.

This collection features relatively simple songs. As they explain: "Everyone can sing along, because these songs are easy to sing. Most parish musicians can accompany these pieces, because they use simple chords. And most choirs can easily learn and sing these songs in harmony, because the choral arrangements are uncluttered and uncomplicated."

Boon

This is certainly a boon to parish musicians and choirs who have more enthusiasm than talent and musical training. These songs don't require operatic singers or conservatory-trained accompanists, which is ideal for the typical Filipino church.

This doesn't mean, though, that these songs are as simple as "Mary had a little lamb." The melodic lines are clear and the chords uncomplicated, but there is still a degree of sophistication in the arrangements that makes one song different from the next.

The songs are also well-rendered. Though the group may intend this album for all people, even the non-musical, their voices are clear, strong, and perfectly in unison.

26 tracks

There are 26 tracks, the first six of which are in English, the rest in Filipino; the last two are instrumental versions of "Tinapay ng Buhay" and "Humayo't Ihayag." Songs 14 to 24 are also classified under "Ang Misa ng Bagong Milenyo," each one ascribed to a portion of the mass that traditionally has music or song accompaniment.

Our favorite song is "Breath of God," an old 19th century hymn that is striking in the purity of its thought and symbols. We were also able to appreciate it more because it can be thought of as a personal hymn. It's a little difficult to fully appreciate the other, more congregational songs in the collection when one is listening to them via headphones. Still, we can appreciate the songs in "Ang Misa ng Bagong Milenyo" as they are more unified than usual.

The inlay is also very helpful, as it contains suggestions for each song —how it should be sung, and when. They also add extra information about the songs, some of it specific to the compositions themselves, and others more to do with faith.

We're hoping to hear more songs like these in our masses this year.

**A faithful friend is a sure shelter;
whoever finds one has found a real treasure.**
-Sirach 6:14

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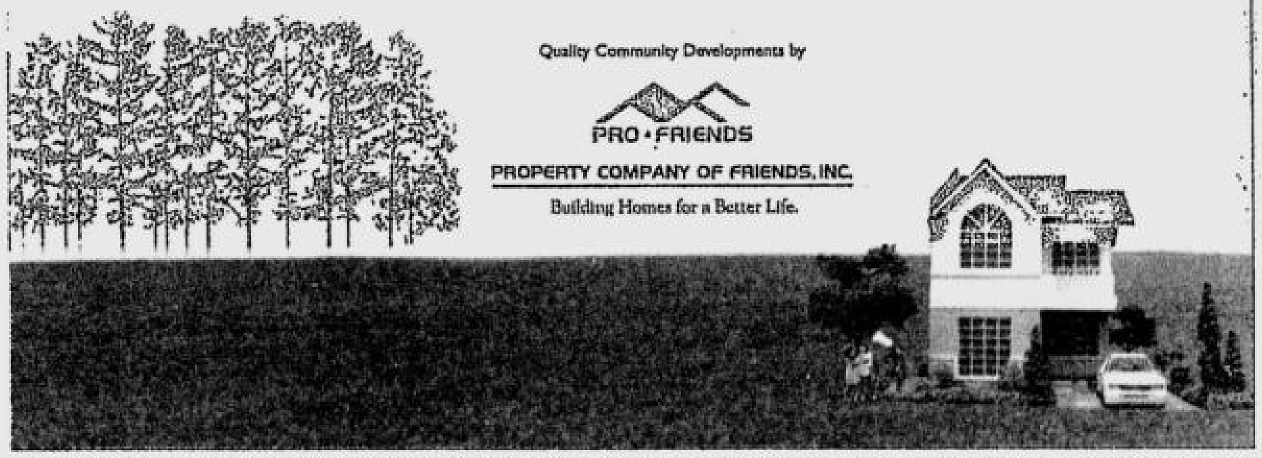

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Philippine Women's University, Gateway Business Park, First Cavite Industrial Park, and De La Salle University and Hospital are just around the corner.
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Mish Ballesca is a rare combination of talent and beauty

By Andy P. Bais

UPCOMING singer Mish Ballesca is a rare combination of beauty and talent. She has an exceptional singing voice that is matched by her angelic face.

Commercial model

No wonder, her career as a TV commercial model once took precedence over her vocal prowess. She started appearing in commercials at the tender age of 13. It also helped that her mother has a talent agency that jump-started her modeling career.

Mish has experience as a live performer. She was a former member of an all-girl group, Soul Kiss, which specialized in original dance music. "But it didn't work out. We were too young then and we didn't really know what we wanted to be, " she recalls.

Band

She next joined a pop and R & B band, but it didn't last long, either. So, she concentrated on her studies and finished a course in production design.

But Mish' passion to perform was just too strong: "Performing is something that I *have* to do. I get so restless if I don't do it. I really want to express who I am through my music," she enthuses.

These sentiments were shared by Mish' friends, who have so much faith in her talent that they put their resources together to act as her managers.

Friend Yvette believes that Mish has a great chance of hitting the bigtime. "*Nakaka*-intrigue *kasi ang dating ni* Mish. She has a powerful voice and, more than that, she is a giving performer, " she beams.

Mish describes her musical influences as eclectic. She listens to anything. "But I am partial to jazz and soul music and, to a certain degree, rock," she says.

Own music

She adds that, musically, she likes to experiment and doesn't want to be branded as a pop singer or diva. "I would rather write my own music and bring out who I am in the music that I create," she explains.

Her knack at writing poetry will come in handy if she decides to revive her songwriting skills.

She confesses her partiality for the musical styles of artists like Lauryn Hill, Norah Jones and Sting. "But I don't think I will be like them," she qualifies.

Mish can't forget the embarrassing experience she had during her first stint as a solo performer:

"I was so nervous and pressured because it was an open-air concert and my first time to sing with an orchestra. So, I forgot the lyrics of one of the songs I sang. It was a really bad experience, and I am still learning from it. Hopefully, it won't happen again!"

BALLESCA. A giving performer.

The lips of her managers are sealed with regards to their immediate plans for their exclusive talent. But more solo performances are coming and a recording contract is not a remote possibility for Mish.

In the meantime, she busies herself with ACT NOW, an acting workshop and movement that urges inhibited artists to live their dreams now. She's also involved in conceptualizing an upcoming television show titled "Food Trip."

Nudity is no big deal for Michael Vartan

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

THIS week's Q&A:

***From Muriel Benitez of Paranaque:* "Thanks for all the great features on my favorite celebrities. Can you also feature Ethan Hawke? I read somewhere that he's got two books published. Are they available locally?"**

Ethan Hawke, last year's Oscar Best Supporting Actor nominee for "Training Day," came out with his first novel, "The Hottest State," in 1996. The New York Times Book Review observes, "Hawke does a fine job of showing what it's like to be young and full of confusion."

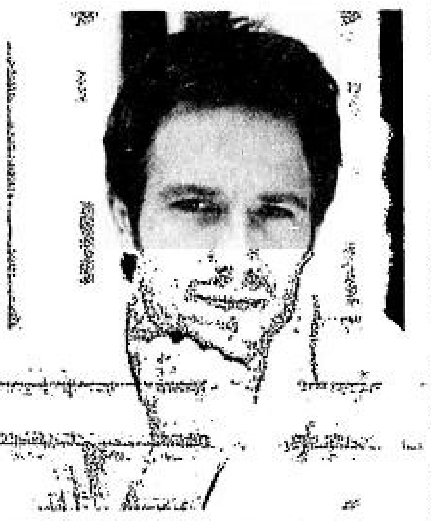
Second novel

Ethan's second novel, "Ash Wednesday," came out last year. For inquiries, call National Bookstore (632-8437558). Or go to www.randomhouse.com.

You may see Ethan soon playing a cameo in ABS-CBN's "Alias." He was married to Golden Globe winner Uma Thurman on May 1, 1998. He had to propose twice to Uma before she said yes.

The 5'10" actor-director (he directed Lisa Loeb's popular music video "Stay") has two kids with Thurman: four-year-old Maya Ray and one-year-old son Levon.

***From Cynthia of cyn_div@sanyotsp.com.ph:* "I became a huge fan of Michael Vartan after my cousin rented a VCD of Drew Barrymore's 'Never Been Kissed.' I know he's in 'Alias,' but can you give me more information about him?"**



VARTAN. Paints and plays the guitar.

The 34-year-old, six-foot looker is the only child of a French father and an American mother who divorced when he was five. He was born and raised in France and spent his childhood shuttling between the two countries.

At 18, he decided against joining the French military service (mandatory for all males above 18 in France) so he went to the US.

Acting debut

He made his acting debut in two French films ("A Man and Two Women," "Summer Strolls") and an Italian feature, "Fiorile."

His first US film was with Patrick Swayzee in "To Wong Foo . . .," and he acted with David Schwimmer and Gwyneth Paltrow in "The Pallbearer."

He gave an impressive performance in "Myth of the Fingerprints" with Julianne Moore and Noah Wyle but was catapulted to popularity and adulation only in "Never Been Kissed."

He describes his character (as CIA agent Michael C. Vaughn) in "Alias" as closer to home than his previous roles, and he loves it.

He says, "I get to do all the stuff that guys fantasize about when they're boys: Be a spy, go to far away places with a beautiful woman, save the day, and get paid for it!"

He paints and also plays the guitar. He was engaged to Shannon Gleason for more than 10 years, but they split up recently.

When "Alias" female lead Jennifer Garner was asked to comment on the charms of Vartan, she readily quipped, "He's smart, he's funny, he's handsome. And when he speaks French—forget it!"

Wonderful

How was it working with Gwyneth Paltrow ("The Pallbearer") and Madonna ("The Next Best Thing")? He shares, "My experience with Gwyneth was wonderful—she was incredibly charming and smart. Madonna, on the other hand, was a different experience. I'll leave it at that!"

As for his nude scenes in the recently released "One Hour Photo" with Robin Williams, he says matter-of-factly, "Robin made a lot of air-conditioning jokes during the shoot—but that's Robin for you.

"I grew up in France and played sports all my life and, not to sound weird or anything, you see naked guys in the locker room all the time. Nudity is really not a big deal to me. If you've never seen it, you need to get out more!"

Write him c/o Stephen Hanks Management, 252 N. Larchmont Blvd, Suite 202, Los Angeles, CA 90004, USA.

Red Bamboo at Eastwood Foodcourt

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

THE RED Bamboo is the newest Japanese fastfood outlet at Eastwood City Foodcourt, along with Jefe Bar (drinks), Xiong Mao (Chinese food), Sizzling Mine (grilled food), Khai (combination of Korean and Thai), and Kusina (Filipino).

The Eastwood Foodcourt seats 250 and is open daily except Sunday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Owners

The four owners of The Red Bamboo love playing badminton and scuba diving. Tessa Neri graduated from University of California, San Diego with a BA Economics degree and lived in the US for 10 years. She came home in 1994.

Dinah Duran worked as a district sales manager for Boehringer Ingelheim, Philippines and is very goal-oriented. She indulges in photography, music, digital arts and pottery. She is in charge of the creative side of Red Bamboo.

VERON Medina (fourth from left), Dinah Duran, Tessa Neri and daughter Andrea Louise, 2, with Red Bamboo staffers.

Veron Medina works as an events manager for a pharmaceutical company. She is a DLSU graduate in BS Chemistry.

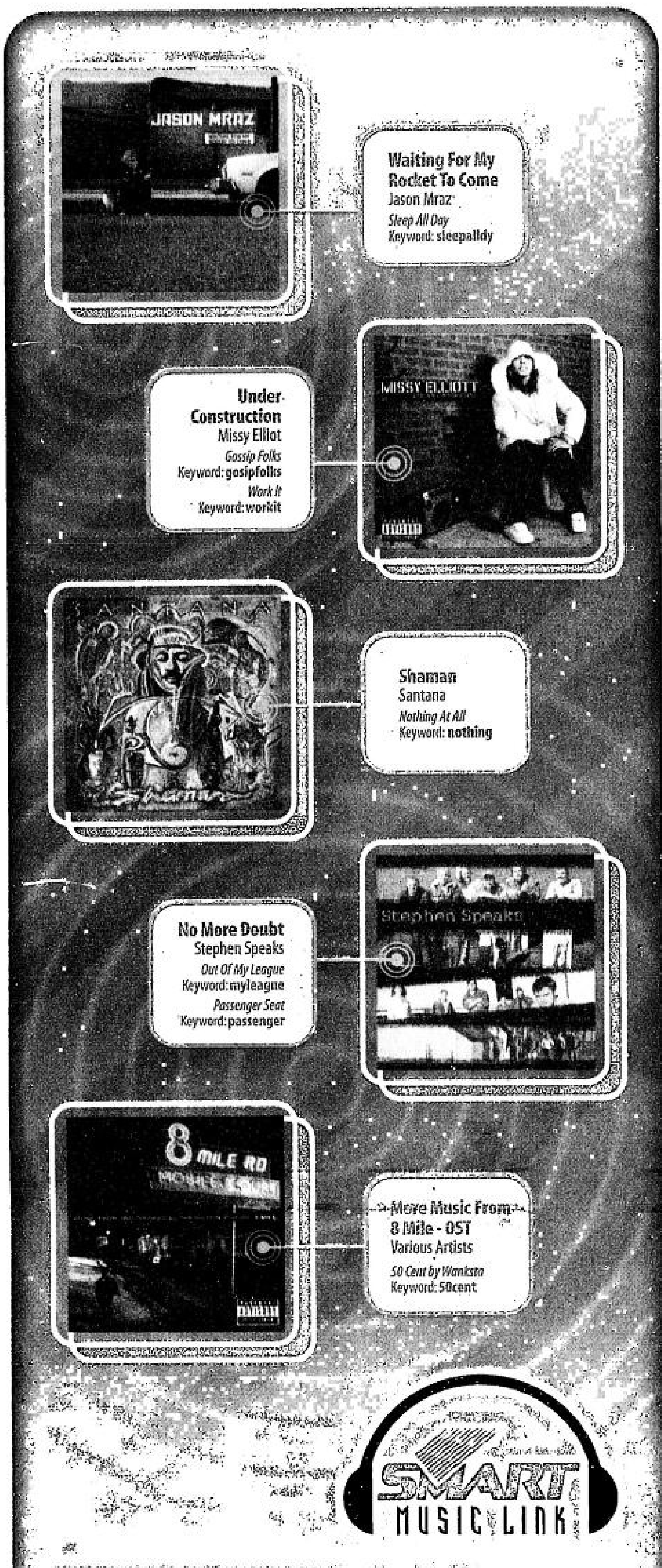
Kitchen

Veron oversees the Red Bamboo's kitchen, staff and inventory. She does the marketing and gets the freshest catch and ingredients of the day.

The Red Bamboo's president, Bettina Luz, worked for two multinational pharmaceutical companies and handled training, sales and marketing. Her dad owns Julio's in Legaspi, so the food business is not really new to her.

All four partners are good friends, are into golf and badminton, and worked or work for multinational pharmaceutical companies. Their coming together was a synergy of abilities and passion.

Contact Mandy at 522-5185 or 89 and 5221905 or CF 0916-7060-130.



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4 **This Is Me... Then** Jennifer Lopez
5 **Josh Groban** Josh Groban
6 **It Had To Be You... The Great American Songbook** Rod Stewart
7 **Come Away With Me** Norah Jones
8 **Only Selfless Love 2** Various Artists
9 **Prelude: Best Of** Charlotte Church
10 **Shaman** Santana keyword: *nothing*
11 **Let Go** Avril Lavigne
12 **Piolo** Piolo Pascual
13 **Flower Drum Song - OST** Various Artists
14 **Under Construction** Missy Elliot keyword: *gosipfolks workit*
15 **Room For Squares: Limited Edition** John Mayer
16 **You Had Me At Hello** Various Artists
17 **Beyond Words: Music Of Gary Valenciano** Various Artists
18 **Daylight** Duncan Sheik keyword: *onehigh*
19 **Lady Sings The Blues** Various Artists
20 **Waiting For My Rocket To Come** Jason Mraz keyword: *sleepalldy*
21 **More Music From 8 Mile - OST** Eminem keyword: *50cent*
22 **Masters Of Chant Chapter III** Gregorian
23 **Hijas Del Tomate** Las Ketchup keyword: *laspayas ketzupsong*
24 **Charmbracelet** Mariah Carey
25 **More Than You Think You Are** Matchbox 20

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For all that it's worth

Planning this supplement in these unpredictable times is like surfing the waves— it depends on how you see it

By MARGE C. ENRIQUEZ

TO SAY that we live in a world of fast change has become a cliché. Yet the paradox is that many of us are not prepared for the changes that manifest in uncertainty or upheaval. How do you ride the tidal wave that sneaks in from nowhere, or the colossal surfs of stressful situations that surge forth one after the other?

In 1989, when I was editing the lifestyle section in another paper, I worked overtime once to do a spread on fashion and society. The issue came out when the December putsch led by rebel soldiers broke in Metro Manila.

The section seemed so out of sync at that time when everybody was paralyzed with fear.

Last November 2000, when I was still handling the Fashion and Home pages of the INQUIRER's Lifestyle section, a team did a tedious pictorial, for which we designed an equally challenging layout. That Friday morning, a super typhoon broke. Commercial flights were cancelled. People in the provinces did not get their copies of the INQUIRER. In Manila, people couldn't leave their homes, as Manila was a great big swamp.

It occurred to me that the format of current lifestyle publications thrived only in a milieu of stability and affluence. Otherwise, a subject of reader interest one day could be totally irrelevant the next. We could feature the most sophisticated mobile phones today and anarchy or a nationwide power shortage tomorrow can make these very same objects useless. On top of which, obviously, a handset can't silence a grumbling stomach.

What should an editor of a section that specializes in marketing and soft news do in such fragile times?

Snob appeal

Now that this supplement is about to be reinstated to its original sched-

FOR ALL/ G3

WHAT'S INSIDE

A connoisseur's pied-a-terre

This pied-a-terre in Makati is a showcase of the owner's collection of vintage objects. Graciano Valenciano's sculpture(1924, a Murano crystal lamp (1940s) and an 18th century copper Japanese orchid bowl are set atop an Art Deco console by Arte Español. G6

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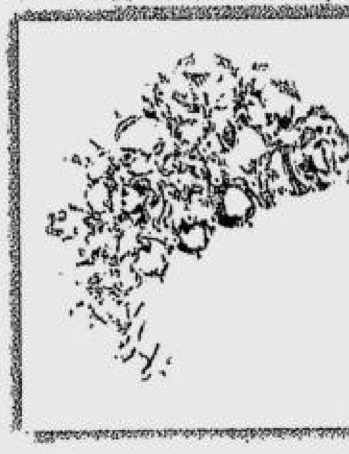
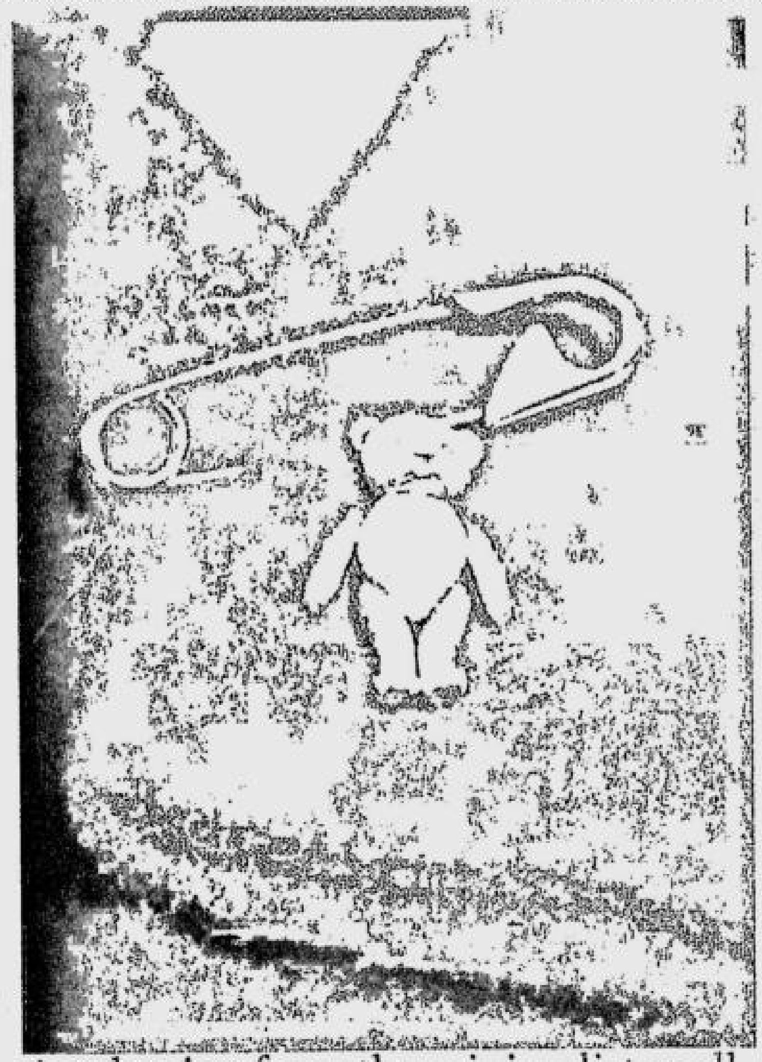
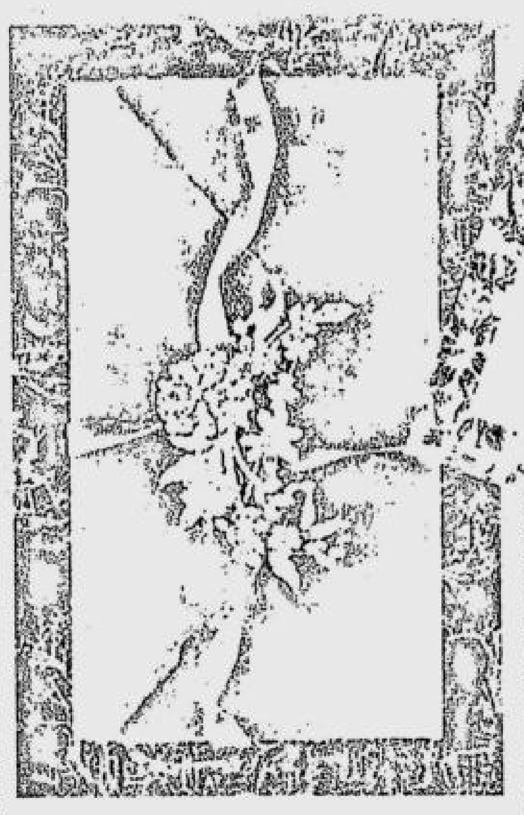
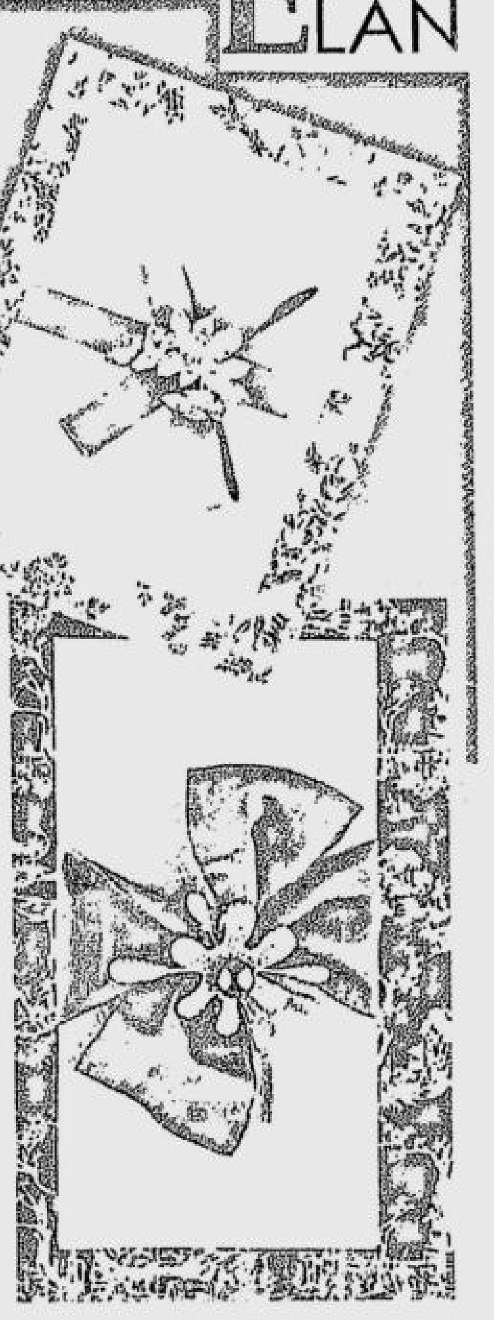


A future under the sign of jewels







Awakening from the minimalist spell, fashion forecaster Li Edelkoort has predicted the rediscovery of precious stones, metals, crystals. She has gone as far as to proclaim: 'Fashion will be the accessory to the accessory'

By BEA P. VALDES
Contributor

"The history of women is hidden by silence or by the flourishes and ornaments that amount to silence."—Virginia Woolf

IN THE last moments before leaving for a special evening event, my mother would stand in front of the mirror, carefully fastening one earring, then the other.

I watched quietly as she then lifted her necklace and rested it against her skin. The sacred silence would be broken only by the snap of the clasp.

These were rare moments when my mother, otherwise a strictly jeans-and-rubber-shoes type, transformed magically into a more elegant and refined woman.

Such was my introduction to the ritual of jewelry. To this day my recollection is flushed with images enriched with fascination, aspiration and emotion. Bewitched by the flickering of light and color, I was bound by the promise: "When you grow up..."

The process or ritual of ornamentation was part of many prehistoric societies. It signified status or rank, or else heralded the celebration of events or stressed their solemnity. Jewelry differed from mere ornaments by virtue of durability, beauty, size and rarity of material. The craft and skill involved in creating each piece, its intrinsic symbolism and sentimental associations further determined its value.

Nice Ice, baby

Elemental to the art of the Impressionists was the animation of light and color. They sought to capture fleeting moments in saturated shades.

In many ways, these explained one other aspect of the gems–crystallized mysteries that marked the passage of time and epitomized temporal phenomenology, poetry erstwhile cocooned between deeper layers of the Earth.

Diamonds are regarded as the most valuable of gems. Reputedly the hardest natural substance, they are created when carbon is subjected to enormous heat and massive pressure. Extracted from abysmal mines, they go through a complex network of dealers to polishing factories, and finally to jewelers. This maze of almost medieval guilds is a globe-trotting trek that takes from one to two years.

With the marketing slogan, "A diamond is forever," De Beers successfully embraced the complementary philosophy of eternal devotion and eternal value. What began as propaganda has evolved into ritual: the diamond engagement ring is now cross-culturally accepted and, in fact, anticipated. The wedding band is normally worn on the fourth finger of the left hand, on account of the honeyed fallacy that a vein in that finger goes directly to the heart.

Tantrums and Tiaras

A sweet smell of excess is wafting throughout the world, as pop culture goes up market. In the spring of 2002, the top-selling accessory item at Henri Bendell New York also happened to be their most costly. This was a diamond necklace customized with the buyer's name, no doubt influenced by "Sex and the City". But before Carrie Bradshaw, there was the luminous Holly Golightly.

Audrey Hepburn, in her Black Gown, oversized sunglasses, amazing up-do and tiara, was brown-bagging breakfast at Tiffany's. An institution in itself, Tiffany's opened its doors on Sept. 18, 1837. Called Tiffany's Stationery and Fancy Goods Emporium, it implemented a radical concept at the time: every item is marked with a non-negotiable selling price. Their first day's sales totaled $4.98.

But even Holly Golightly had her inspiration rooted in real life. Coco Chanel made chic the radical concept of being able to wear precious gems on an everyday basis, even with sportswear.

"My jewelry is adaptable and can be dismantled and put back together again," she declared. She also made wearing faux pearls and costume jewelry fashionable, saying, "A set of jewelry is no longer immutable. Life transforms it, adapting it to necessities."

This irreverence towards formal notions about jewelry is exemplified by the one piece of jewelry she did not wear. There was the infamous incident between her and one of her many lovers, the Duke of Westminster. Aboard his yacht, the Cutty Sark, a quarrel erupted between the lovers. As a peace offering, he presented her with a fabulous emerald necklace, which she angrily refused. Instead, she flung it overboard.

Future under the sign of jewels

Li Edelkoort, the force behind Trend Union, fashion's forecasting powerhouse, describes herself as a " nomadic observer of the future." As early as spring of 2001 she talked of fashion on the "verge of a Copernican revolution, a future under the sign of jewels."

A historical perspective: For the last 15years the doctrine of minimalism has ruled, promoting abstinence from ornament. Its aesthetic was self-sufficient, with no need for precious punctuation. Jewels were locked away in the safe, alienated from one's daily wardrobe.

In an awakening from this minimalist spell, Edelkoort succinctly predicted the rediscovery of precious stones, metals, crystals. There would be an earthy, luxurious, urban revolution, she said, going so far as to proclaim: "Fashion will be the accessory to the accessory."

She explained: clothes would be formed according to the way they could best showcase jewelry. For instance, a beautiful brooch would need a jacket with the perfect lapel. Further, fashion would actually be influenced by the shades of the jewelry we would want to wear. In the same mood as Coco Chanel, Edelkoort stated: "It's time to go beyond the obvious, break the rules, mix as much as possible, widen our aim."

Precise chapters

Her contention was that jewelry trends had "precise chapters", much like the ages of man. A brief run-through of her forecast:

The first of these chapters begins with semi-precious stones, like amber and turquoise, which have a "direct dialogue" with the earth. Irregular in shape and chromatic in range, these can "marry" with noble metal or poorer found materials like bone, horn, and plastic.

Metals follow, in a non-Baroque sense. They reflect street style-sexy, tough, very tech-related.

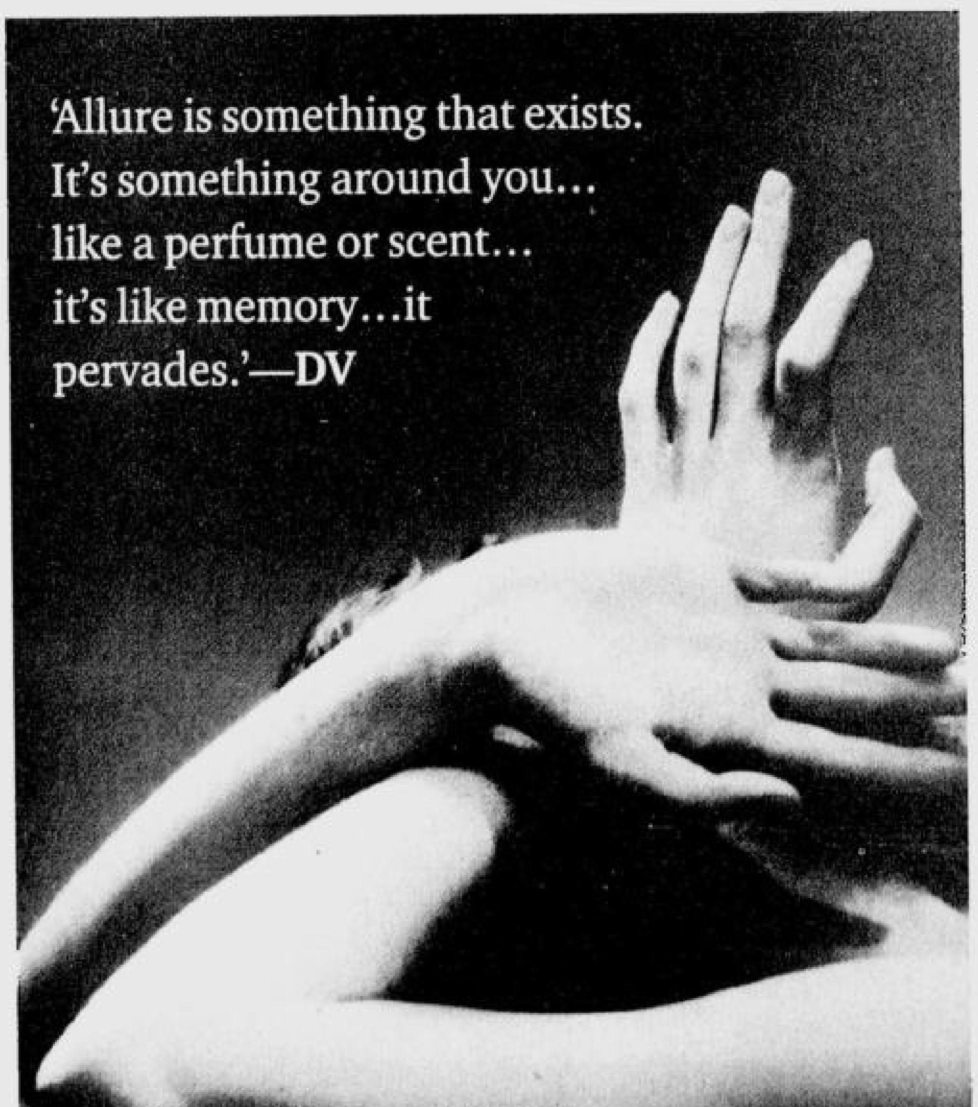
Animals and their prints, from zebra strips to cow spots-will be popular. Animals will become anecdotes and metaphors for personal fetish.

Edelkoort believes in the resurrection of Bakelite, for its graphic appeal and lacquered luster. It comes in a combination of shapes and hues, which will affect fabrics and furniture.

Pearls are the only gems formed by a living organism. Plus they are fully formed and polished when found. Throughout history, they have been entrenched in elaborate mythology. The ancient Romans believed they were frozen tears of the gods. Edelkoort calls them the "cool-chic emblem." She says they will be worn on multiple strings, and that they will come in all sorts of rich, opulent hues and robust, imperfect shapes. She talks of an imminent "pearlization" of surfaces in decorating.

Finally, diamonds, which expresses "final tailoring" in fashion, will be lietmotif in eyeglasses, heels and shades. There will emerge an increased popularity of colored diamonds, which are rare by nature.

Trend forecasting looks at how we live today and what we will be searching for in the future. We examine our own image in the mirror, now that we have grown up. There is a return to the precious-from the twilight of minimalism to today's technological revolution. We are bound to tire of placing merit on the virtual and investing in the unreal. Its jewelry that satisfies the dream for absolutely palpable luxury.



'Allure is something that exists. It's something around you... like a perfume or scent... it's like memory...it pervades.'—DV

VREELAND'S fetish for limbs

Diana Vreeland's 'Allure'

By CHERISH GARCIA-HERNANDEZ
Contributor

Allure
Diana Vreeland, with Christopher Hemphill
Bulfinch Press, May 2002

ONE cannot understand modern fashion without being familiar with Diana Vreeland's work. This larger-than-life woman defined 20th century wear during her years as fashion editor of Bazaar and, later, Vogue–two of the most influential fashion magazines of our time. Her audacity and unwavering originality shattered boundaries and forever changed the way clothes were regarded.

She fondly recalls how her Vogue staff was aghast when she once suggested cutting up some photographs to put together one model's face and another's legs and still another's torso. Her argument was that a woman with extraordinary legs did not always have the face to go with it, and vice-versa. Of course, with digital imaging today, we see that Vreeland's ideas were less outrageous than they were ahead of their time. And while a whole generation had the good fortune of being cast under her spell while she was alive, we have to be content with snippets of her genius, mercifully archived through books like "D.V.," "Why don't you: The Bazaar Years," and "Allure."

"Allure" has been out of print for 15 years and, lucky for us, this much-sought after book has now been reprinted in a gorgeous new edition. It is a hefty coffee table book of photographs by some of the century's greatest photographers, among them Horst, De Meyer, Avedon, Beaton, Penn, and Steichen. With both the inside and outside covers bathed in the deep red that Vreeland loved, the volume features celebrated personalities like Garbo, Nureyev, Callas, The Duchess of Windsor, and Josephine Baker.

The photographs-running the gamut of styles, from studio portraits to paparazzi shots-offer an intimate glimpse of the editor's sharp eye. Vreeland says of them: "This is a potpourri which I chose to amuse and perhaps please the reader". Some of them were never published, like photographs of an eyelift operation in the '60s, that she commissioned for Vogue, which sent some of her staff running to the restroom to throw up. (Today, photographs like this routinely appear on the pages of magazines.)

Though personally picked by Vreeland, the 165 images are not all from her magazines. In her commentary, Vreeland reflects on each, in the context of her trademark witty-effusive style as editor. She takes the reader beyond the photographs into a creative, luxurious world as only she could describe.

When she talks about a picture Baron de Meyer took of his wife Olga, for instance, Vreeland lets us in on the gossip that Olga was the illegitimate daughter of Edward VII. Also, how Olga's husband had this opulent room built for her in the middle of the Black Forest, and how she eventually died of cancer. Listening to her, and I say this because you can almost hear her voice, it's almost like listening to a fairy tale.

She describes Maria Callas as being "plain as mud" in person, and tells of how she woke up Richard Avedon in the middle of the night to photograph the ballerina Maya Plisetskaya. She describes everything in superlatives; her gushing narrative is mesmerizing. Her legendary vision comes alive when she talks about her experiences as an editor.

Given the opportunity to photograph a rare 90-carat diamond from Harry Winston once, she bemoaned how really ordinary a hand could be. It occurred to her that precious stones belonged to people of color because "there are no veins of precious stones where white people come from". In an inspired move, she had a white hand painted black and photographed it wearing the diamond. The result was stunning.

"I loathe narcissism but I approve of vanity," she says when asked about her opinion on plastic surgery. Her irrepressible personality is drawn out in interviews with Christopher Hemphill, a New York-based writer and photography historian.

This book is a must for anyone with a single stylish bone in his/her body. The fact that it was a coveted item in the out-of-print market for years should be reason enough to get hold of a copy at all costs!

Originally, Hemphill suggested the title "Beyond Fashion." To which Vreeland replied, "Is there anything beyond fashion?"

Email the author at cherishgh@yahoo.com

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ÉLAN

For all that it's worth

From page G1

ule of every second and fourth Saturday of the month, editor-in-chief Letty J. Magsanoc has asked me to explain Elan's direction.

Elan was conceived in the early '90s primarily as a tool to lend news value to the products and services of advertisers. Since INQUIRER's image was a middle-of-the-road newspaper, Elan was an opportunity to create a niche–the AB market, thus the socials and the activities of Manila's 400.

When I took over last January 2002, I waxed poetic about my vision for the new Elan. Oops! The limitations of eight to 12 pages for a monthly supplement soon dealt me a reality check.

Nonetheless, Elan continued being marketing-savvy with advertisers. To illustrate: Elan reported on Adidas positioning itself as a luxury brand. Photographer Patrick Uy captured France-based danseur Ernest Mandap's dramatic jumps and beautiful feet. He was wearing Adidas, naturally. A few months later, a similar concept of a body in motion was used in the campaign of another brand.

The section continued to feature stories that evoked exclusivity–an original concept of Elan. Pansukian Resort, a slice of paradise in Surigao del Norte, that makes Boracay seem so commonplace, was featured in Conde Naşt publications. It opened its doors to Elan. The Lizares family of Bacolod laid out heirloom china only for our Christmas issue. They were last used when Presidents Quezon and Magsaysay visited the city. First Daughter Evangeline "Luli" Arroyo granted a rare interview, had a makeover by Toto Bagambasbad and was styled by Ramon Bilbao. Rustan's got added mileage from the Facconable separates and the Mikimoto pearls that the young Arroyo wore.

Hazards

Alas, reporting on the affluent poses hazards, too. In June, Elan wrote about the expensive tastes of Negrense Rep. Julio Ledesma IV-artworks, wines, travels, etc. A month later, his relationship with movie star Assunta de Rossi was hyped up and the television stations featured Ledesma's property in San Carlos, Negros Oriental. Last September, his children were kidnapped.

We also photographed professionals known in their work as well as for their fashion sense. One of the scions featured in that shoot was scolded by his family for appearing in the papers. Some clan members were kidnapped around the same time.

Likewise, writing about the elite presents limitations. I've come across women from old rich families who will grant interviews only about their charities and not about their businesses or their personal lives.

A famous matriarch once said there's not much left to say about the country's elite because their numbers were dwindling, anyway. Many refuse to be interviewed for fear of being hounded either by the BIR or by criminal elements, or of being criticized by their peers for going public.

It is possible for 'high moral ground' to make a killing, too

Challenges

That's the challenge: How does one lead the readers through the crests of change? As our long-held, cherished beliefs are confronted, a journalist's job is to make these matters clear to the readers. American media consultant Judy Rodgers defines media's role: "When we're making a choice about an image, message or story to send out to others or to bring into our homes, we need to ask ourselves, 'Will this expand our sense of possibilities, or constrict it?'"

Elan was meant to be synonymous with exclusivity. But now barriers are breaking down. Even in the retail scene, luxury brands that are synonymous to snobbery are downplaying their logos and egos to reach a wider market.

Success today is no longer characterized by position and possession but by something more intangible, like stability in crisis and beneficial human relationships. Elle magazine cited a research which showed that people who measured success with material possessions got low satisfaction in life.

The magazine quoted psychologist Leaf Von Boren's view: "The accumulation of rich experiences thus creates a richer life." Besides, the affluent are also beginning to realize that they may be rich in things but poor in quality time.

Class is no longer defined as something that comes in a fancy package, but a virtue of authenticity.

People are inundated with loads of information, when they are really searching for nuggets of wisdom.

For so long, consumers have been tricked into buying products because of what they say, not what they do. Imaginative marketers have created feelings and meanings to attach to products, to make them desirable one day (thus the term "must-have") and obsolete the next, to keep the demand growing.

Today, consumers have realized that many products are merely vehicles of utility. A young businessman told me that, five years ago, people would snap up a P5, 000 pair of jeans because it was perceived to be a symbol of the wearer's social status and his or her devotion to a certain lifestyle. "In these times, I wouldn't spend P5, 000 on that. A pair of jeans is a pair of jeans," he said.

Even media agencies have begun re-evaluating their roles. One popular belief is that news consumers have the leverage, therefore, media's job is to satisfy the public's appetite to be aroused, stunned, or entertained, thus maintaining the fare of gossip, gloss and gore (usually, these are cleverly disguised in slick language.)

And good news? Does it still sell?

The success of "Chicken Soup for the Soul" and Oprah Winfrey's talk show and magazine were clear answers: it is possible for "high moral ground" to make a killing, too. British broadcaster Martyn Lewis proved as much, creating a formula for covering straight news that appeals to what is best and most hopeful in us.

Inspirational

From 1996 to mid-'99, when I was still collating the "Thumbs Up" and "Thumbs Down" column in the Sunday Lifestyle section, people would come up to me like buzzing moths asking whodunit? As they added their input, eventually, the topics became insipid.

At about the same time, I was writing stories on emotional quotient, improving relationships, and self-esteem. Figures from the INQUIRER's website pointed out that these stories scored "very high" on the hit list.

In last month's issue of Elan, we had "That Vision Thing" by Mike George. That cover story was passed around at the lobby of a five-star hotel. It's amazing how media can change not only people's streams of conversation, as well as their perception of others, by the images and narratives they put out.

Does that mean that Elan is going the way of inspirational journalism? Well, there are many readers who are still too entrenched in their comfort zones of wanting to know all about travel, fashion and beauty, food, society, etc., and we also have commitments to advertisers.

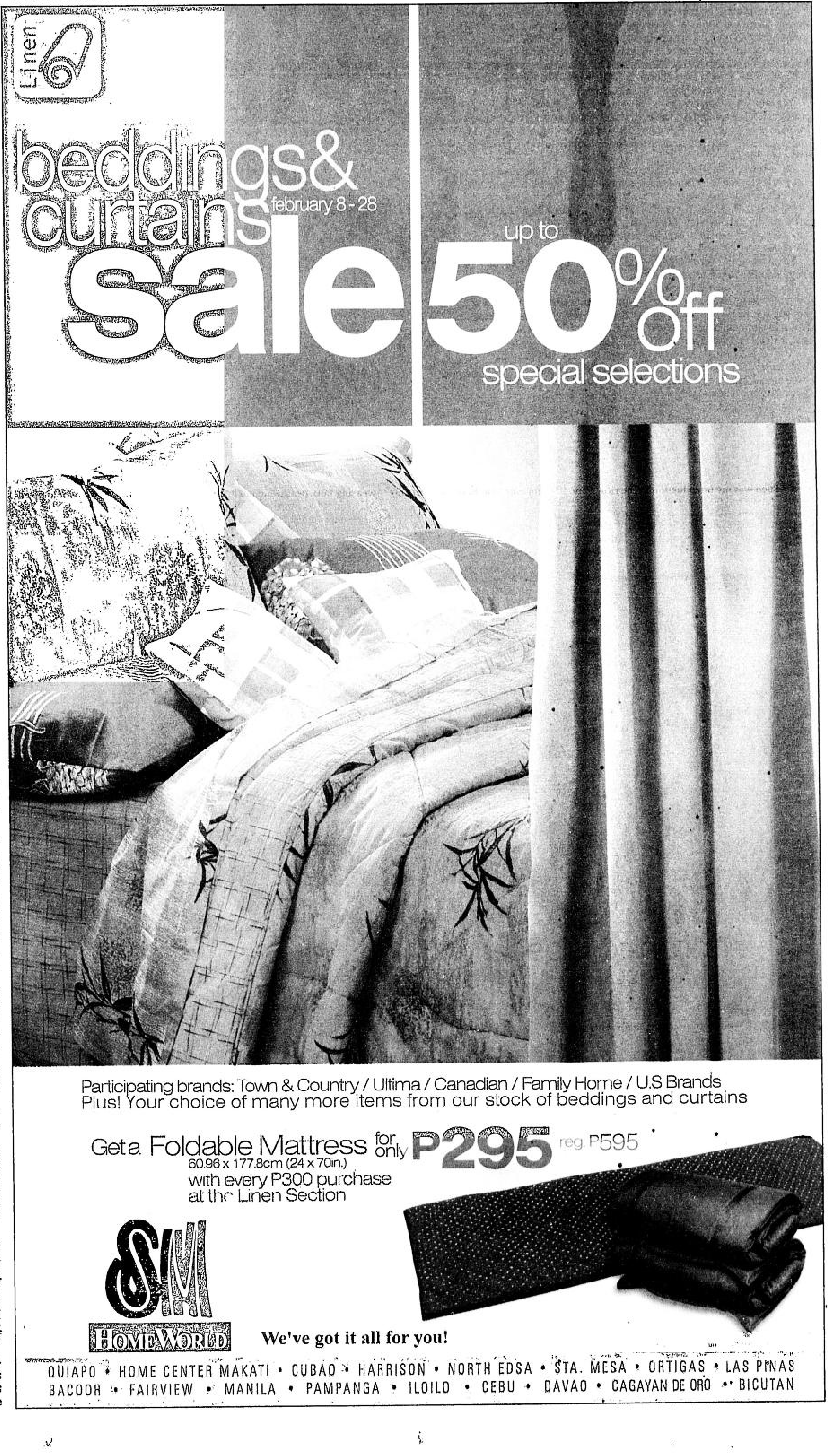
I am often asked what makes Elan different from other sections and publications, even while it explores generally the same subjects. I like to give the analogy of a group of equally competent chefs who are tasked to make a soufflé. Although they may use the exact formula and ingredients, not one soufflé will come out the same as another, because no two people are alike, ever, in interpreting one single recipe.

Elan should then be enjoyed for whatever it's worth. Make that for all that it's worth.

TV show on body-mind link

MARTIN Camara is arguably the country's most popular chiropractor. It's not just because of his boyish looks but more of his progressive mind. He's one of the country's proponents of alternative health care. His clinic Intercare integrates nonsurgical and drugless ways to heal patients. Starting Feb. 12, Dr. Camara will be hosting a segment called "Bodyworks" in a new show on holistic living called "Lifesssence." For 13 episodes he will talk about chiropractic, myotherapy, sports medicine and physical therapy, acupuncture, homeopathy and anthrosophy, Alexander Technique and stress management. This segment will explain how these modes complement each other. "Lifessence" will be shown every Wednesday, 6 p.m. at ANC. Hosted by Angel Jacob.

DR. CAMARA gives a quick fix.



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AS the line between sportswear and fashion further blurs, it is no wonder that Puma's sales growth in the Philippines has taken a 40 percent leap.

The Filipino's casual lifestyle augurs well with this sportswear brand. "Even if our products are sporty, they can be worn in more formal environments. In that respect, it's a very good market," says Ian Woodcock, Puma's regional director for licensing support.

This success, despite a dismal retail scene, is attributed to the nationwide distribution (over a hundred accounts in stores), the products' prominent placement in Planet Sports and Athlete's Foot, and the brisk business generated by its freestanding stores at Festival Mall, Ali Mall, and Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

Encouraged by the receipts, Puma is set to be more bullish in its product mix. "We are bringing in success stories like Avantis and Easy Riders. We have done our ground work and positioned ourselves well in the lifestyle category, moved to a higher notch," says Sameer Prasad, general manager of Planet Sports Inc., which carries the brand.

Woodcock points out that, globally, the sports market is massive and also massively changing. "Sports and fashion are merging more strongly. Five years ago people wore sports brands as fashion (though these) were not deliberately crafted as fashion products. Now there is hardly a major sports brand that is not associated with a major fashion designer."

Puma has been associated with designers known for streamlined silhouettes, such as Jil Sander, Miharo, Neil Barrett and Marc Jacobs. When tennis star Serena Williams launched the midriff tank that can be worn off court, many brands and designer labels jumped on the trend.

"Our distribution system falls into categories (dictated by) the customer. There are products specific to the high-end market. There is a sport lifestyle segment, but not fashion. You can't sell a technical shoe in a fashion store. Only runners buy that. And there's no point in selling a fashion shoe in a store known for running shoes because it's not what our consumer wants. By controlling distribution, the brand remains desirable. We are globally a very hot brand," he says.

Puma also has a strong sports lifestyle business, Woodcock adds.

Abroad it has created a niche in the luxury sportswear. If the average sneaker costs $25 to $50, Platinum Footwear for men starts at $200 and averages $350 a pair. It is made in the same Italian factory that produces shows for Prada.

So as not to compete with Nike or Reebok, it has developed other categories for the discerning market. Puma offers a pack of men's apparel good for 96 hours.

Woodcock explains: "The average business trip takes 96 hours, so we give you a pack–jackets, pants, casual, exercise wear, full leather footwear–in an aluminum case. You buy the whole pack for US$4000 and it weighs only 12 kilos."

Puma has sold over 200 packs worldwide. "It's the imaging that is tremendous," Woodcock enthuses.

With the unmitigated popularity of Pilates and yoga, Puma hired supermodel and yoga buff Christy Turlington to head the Nuala line of holistic products. She approves the designs and materials and talks about the rational behind the line. A lower-priced line called Maha Nuala carries items made from less expensive fabrics.

"We do basics like everyone, but we have concept lines, like the Originals, which harks back to the '70s and '80s," Woodcock says. "We have been around since 1958. There are lots of things we can draw influences from, and update."

Puma's business is 65 percent footwear and 35 percent apparel and accessories. In Asia, however, apparel accounts for 45 percent of sales.

As a Philippine licensee, Puma's apparel and accessories are made locally, under strict quality control. Some of the footwear are made in Marikina. This–no freight charges and taxes–naturally guarantees savings for the consumer.

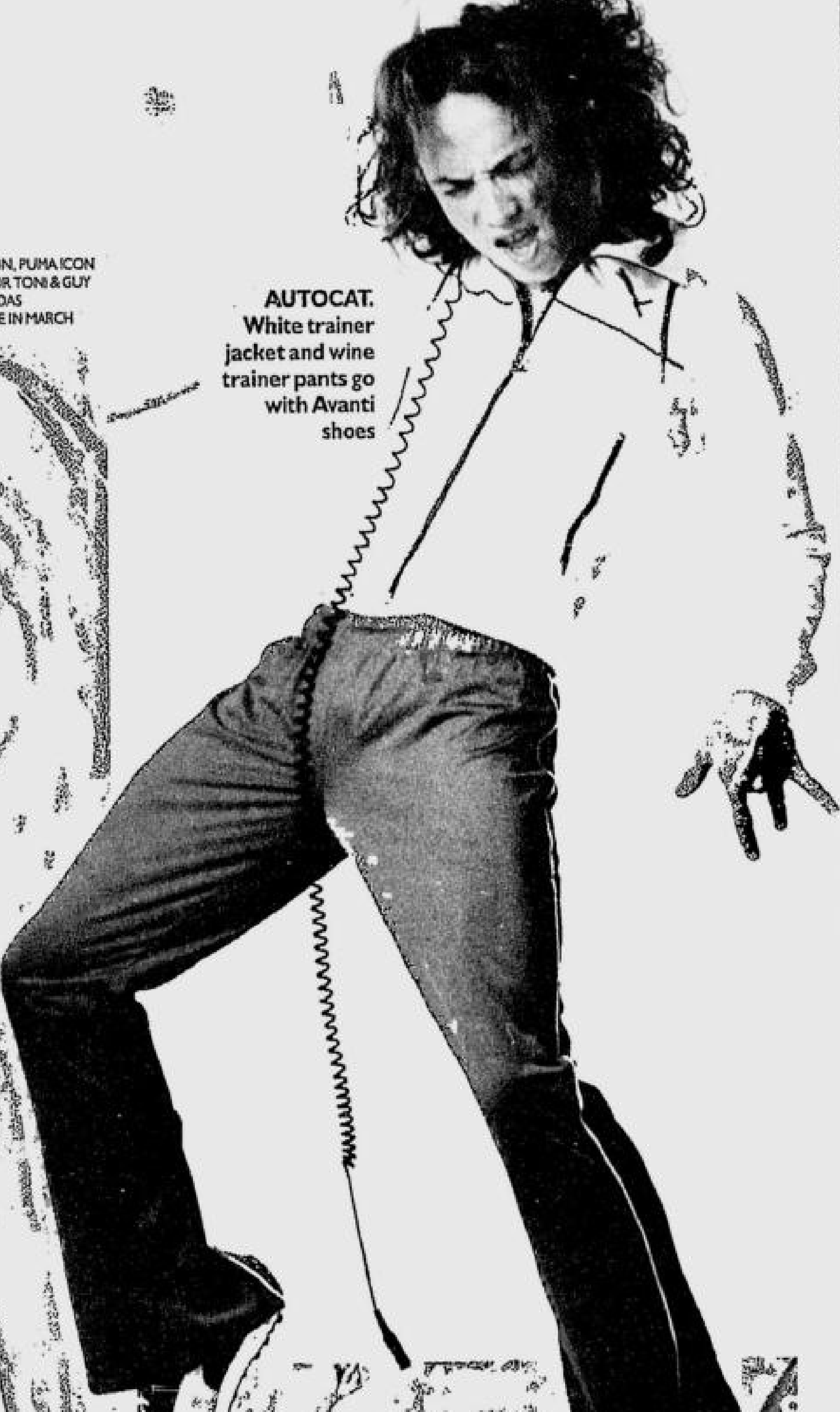
Competition among sportswear brands gets stiffer by the day, but Woodcock welcomes it. "If we are out on our own promoting ourself in the sports lifestyle category, people would wonder: Is this a serious business or not? The fact that Adidas and Nike are around, makes concept selling to retailers much easier."

Marge C. Enriquez

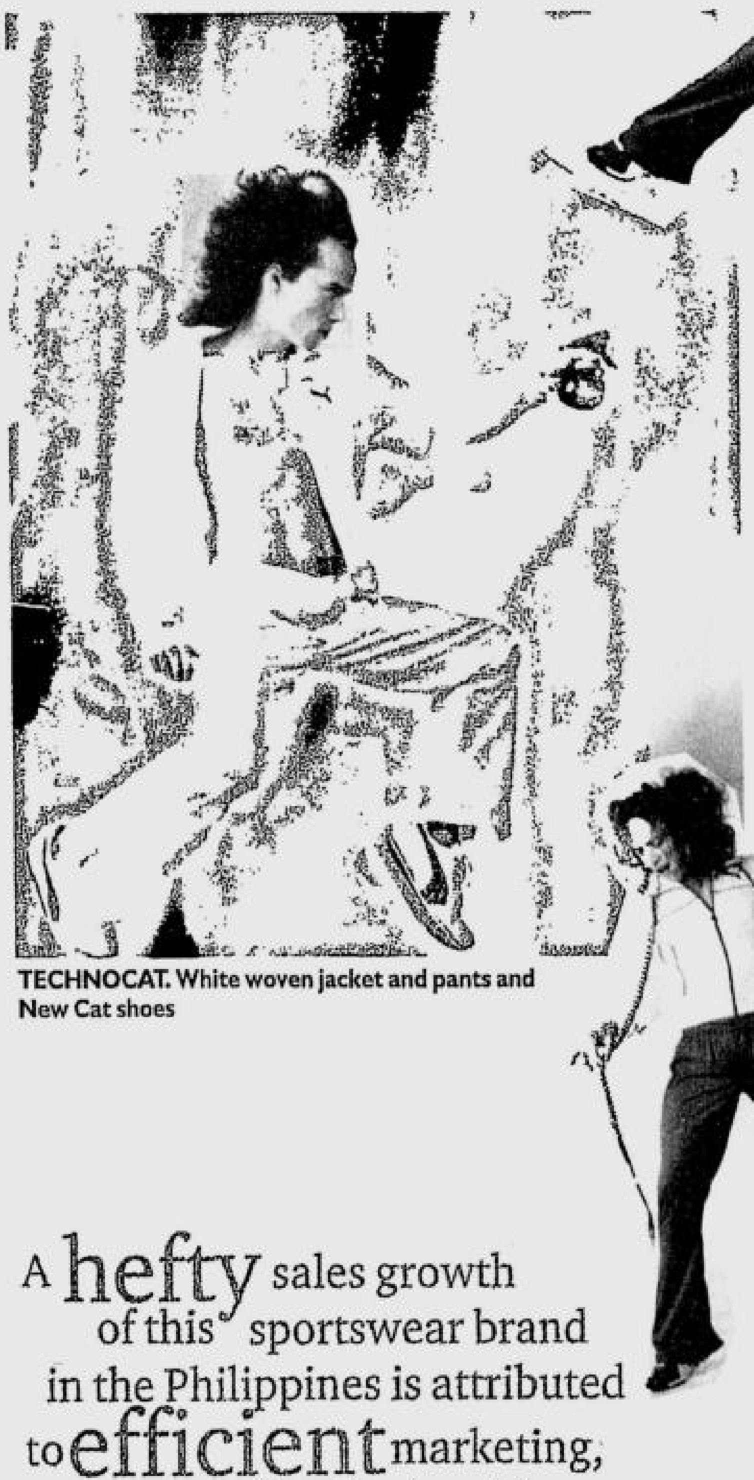
BUREAUCAT. Competition Graphic Tee in spectra yellow and square-cut shorts in urban chic gray with Temo shoes

Photos by Patrick Uy
Pictorial direction by Antonio Salac Santos
Digital imaging by Marlone Rubio

MODEL: JEFFREY QUIZON, PUMA ICON
HAIR: NELSON CRUZ FOR TONI & GUY
GROOMING: LEO POSADAS
MOST STYLES AVAILABLE IN MARCH



AUTOCAT. White trainer jacket and wine trainer pants go with Avanti shoes



TECHNOCAT. White woven jacket and pants and New Cat shoes

A hefty sales growth of this sportswear brand in the Philippines is attributed to efficient marketing, as well as the locals' casual lifestyle.

ARISTOCAT. White basketball tank shirt worn with black ripstop pants and Harambee Street Shoes

DEMOCAT. Orange Catalyst winged tee shirt and white woven pants

Making light of other matters

By Adrian V. Lizares
Contributor

All the theatrics you could put together for any event would be for naught, should you forget proper lighting

IMAGINE yourself on a secluded beach, your stylish home sporting all the trappings of a tropical getaway.

You are lounging with a friend over very dry martinis, listening to good music. Words come easy, soft and smooth as the blue cheese and spinach dips that you prepared yourself. You have a cigarette or two, minding only where the smoke goes.

But you know that all the theatrics you have put together for this cocooning event would be for naught, had you not bothered to install proper lighting.

Today's most discerning hosts take everything into consideration, on top of all the thought that goes into drawing up the guest list. Good lighting it is that makes these guests look good, and the host shine. Good lighting should be the mantra of conscientious party-givers.

In fact, this goes beyond parties. For those who manage public spaces or are engaged in the retail business, lighting is of prime import. It enhances the atmosphere, sets the mood for all matters at hand.

Born to be partners

Christine "Tingting" Sicangco is a lighting designer in Bacolod. She takes her job seriously, as does her husband Jo Vincent Gonzaga. She is a graduate of the Parsons School of Design, with a Masters Degree in Architectural Lighting Design; he has a degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California.

They were introduced by friends during diving lessons. At the time, Tingting already had a workshop bearing her name, where she fashioned lamps out of hand-made paper and metal fittings. These lamps and lighting fixtures complemented the furniture line that her sister, Kathy, manufactured.

Jovi had just arrived from studies abroad and was settling back into the hometown. Soon he found himself in courtship, offering two proposals–one of marriage, and another to help out with Tingting's work. They have since been a team. She whips up designs for lighting fixtures, and he makes sure these are properly executed.

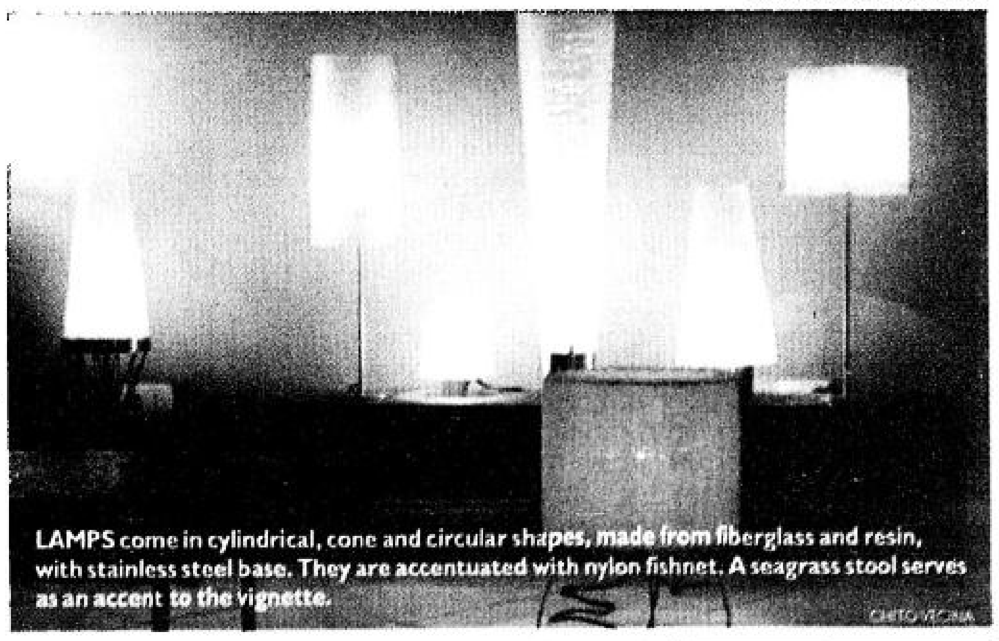
Tingting comes from a family of accomplished professionals. Her father is a doctor, and the brood consists of dancers, stage designers, doctors, architects, and lawyers. The family also runs a restaurant that has been a landmark in the city since the 1960s. Jovi comes from a more traditional and entrepreneurial family involved in sugar production, among others. The odds are evened out: Jovi would rather not be in the forefront–which is where Tingting comes in.

Her designs are influenced by materials found and used around the island. She started out making lamps from handmade paper with wrought iron bases. Soon the concept was being duplicated elsewhere. However, paper shades could not withstand various weather conditions. Tingting used resin and fiberglass that are not only pliable but also sturdy. The shades go with stainless steel bases. Her geometric lamps, made from nylon fishnet, make it to the stylish shops in Manila, like Firma, and some stores abroad

Tingting and Jovi are experimenting with newer techniques to improve their new line, drawing from various inspirations, taking their art to higher levels. The lampshades are taking biomorphic forms. Yes, art. It has ceased to be just expression, or livelihood, for them.

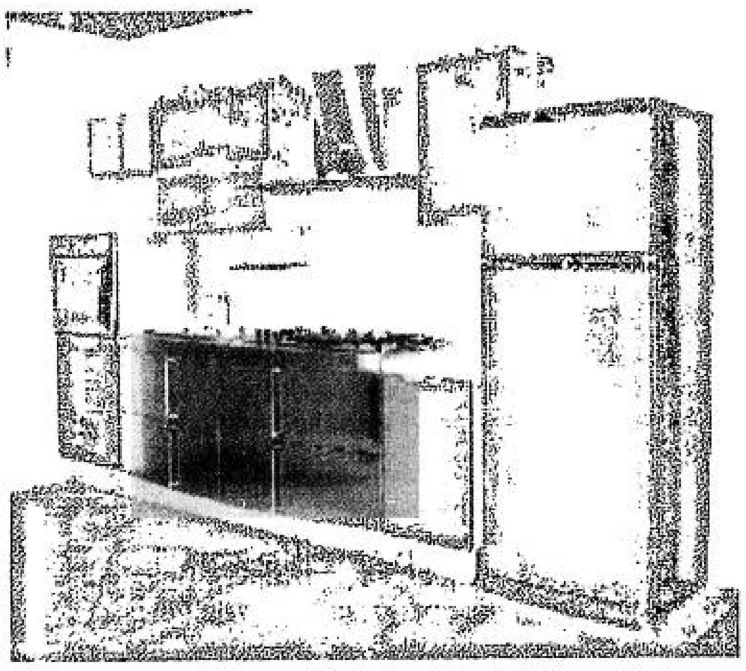
Not too long ago, the couple wondered if they were going anywhere at all with this endeavor. A quick assessment of their extraordinary work with lights guarantees that they won't be in the dark for long.

TINGTING AND JOVI GONZAGA
SIGON EXPORTS, INC.
SITIO BITO, BARAGAY ESTEFANIA
VILLAMONTEBACOLOD CITY
TEL (034) 7030838FAX (034) 4339198



LAMPS come in cylindrical, cone and circular shapes, made from fiberglass and resin, with stainless steel base. They are accentuated with nylon fishnet. A seagrass stool serves as an accent to the vignette.

CHITO VECINA



Kitchen showcase in Megamall featuring Ariston's Italian cooktop, rangehood, oven and ref.

Ask Any Italian

How you can make sure that your appliances are 100% made in Italy.

It's no secret. Italians have taste. Think Armani, Cerruti, Versace and Zegna and you know the Italians have style. Their fine aesthetic sense has even somewhat eclipsed their pioneering advances in technology. For instance, top Formula 1 race car Ferrari is an Italian creation as are Lamborghini and Alfa Romeo - automobiles with proven superior performance at times overshadowed only by their stunning design.

Because of the way they combine fine design with superior function, it's no wonder there is a growing preference for Italian products transcending just fashion and automobiles. The appliance industry is no exception to this belief - being Italian serves as a premium for one's products. Because of this, it's not surprising that many businesses will try to take advantage of this trend and join the bandwagon. However, how many of those kitchen and household appliance brands really are of authentic Italian or European origin? It pays to know.

1. Find out how many of its products are made in Italy. Are they all completely built-up in Italy or are there just a few so that they have a reason to claim to be Italian? If it's the latter, then you know that brand is just trying to latch on to the Italian bandwagon [and most of its products are manufactured locally. While there is nothing wrong with locally manufactured products, just don't be misled into thinking they are 100% Italian].

2. Check out the brand's parent company. How does it fare in Italy? Is it among the top 10? Top 50? Or even 5000? Check out its website (does it have one in the first place?). There are also Italian government agencies in the Philippines that can be consulted on this such as the Italian Trade commission or perhaps even the Italian Embassy.

3. Perhaps the simplest way is to ask any Italian what appliance brand is best known in Italy. You will be surprised to find out that even very popular brands in the Philippines who claim to be of Italian origin are practically unknown in Italy.

Ariston – Italy's #1

Just about any Italian would know Ariston. It is Italy's #1 brand in home appliances manufactured by top Italian appliance maker – Merloni Elettrodomestici. Merloni Elettrodomestici SPA was established in 1975. A long way from its humble beginnings, this accomplished appliance maker produces a full line of cooking, washing and cooling appliances. Having been listed in the Milan Stock Exchange since 1987, it has 17 factories and 21 subsidiaries across Europe and the Far East producing more than 12 million units annually with the help of its 20,000 staff. In fact, Merloni has grown 20 times in 20 years from its original size, and based on its performance over the last two years, it's still growing. Merloni Elettrodomestici was given a special feature on Dana Chase Publication's "Appliance Magazine" in its November issue last year to showcase its success, strength and influence in the appliance industry worldwide (http://appliancemagazine.com).

In the Philippines, Ariston is exclusively distributed by Fabriano SPA, Inc., a company with over 37 years of solid experience in appliances. Ariston has a vast range of household appliances such as freestanding cookers, built-in hobs, built-in ovens, range hoods, washers and dryer, dishwasher, refrigerators and freezers all completely built-up (CBU) from Italy and Europe.

Italian Designer Kitchens

Since it is 100% Italian-made, Ariston offers advanced cooking features innovated by the Italians. Among them, the micro piezo-electric ignition, the vitro-ceramic cooktop, flame failure safety device, convection ovens, and the use in its design of the finest stainless steel metal – the SUS304, best known for its durability and high-grade quality. For customers serious about household cooking, he or she can opt for Ariston's Professional Series. Characterized by advanced cooking features such as triple-crown burners, multi-function oven, tangential ventilation, double-glazed oven door, hard-wearing cast iron pan support, highest suction capacity (for range hoods) and sleek classical lines which add to the stainless steel's heavy-duty professional aspect, these freestanding and built-in appliances perfectly fit into the home setting, not only for their shape and color, but also because of the perfect balance between performance and the evolving needs of the consumer.

Ariston Laundry Products – Perfect for Designer Clothing

With innovation as one of its core competencies, Ariston is also better known for its high-performance laundry machines. One of Ariston's visionary actions is the development of Margherita 2002, the only washing machine in the world to guarantee safe washing of wool garments. Labelled as "Woolmark Platinum," it is another exclusive patent by Merloni. Tests carried out in the Woolmark Company laboratories based in the UK certify that Ariston is the first and only washing machine to clean & care for wool items declared washable only by hand. In addition, the Class "A" at 40°C program allows you to obtain a perfect washing result at such temperature when other washing machines can only achieve similar results at 60°C. Ariston Washing Machine was also named the Best Choice among all washing Machine brands by Choice Magazine, an Australian consumer assistance publication.

Unequalled 3-year Warranty

Ariston's exclusive distributor in the Philippines, Fabriano SPA, Inc., offers its customers an unequalled 3-year warranty on parts and service – a testament to its commitment to total satisfaction of customer and its confidence in the quality of Ariston products.

Call or visit the Ariston showrooms at the 4th level of Shangri-La Plaza (tel. no. 631-8282), 5th level Bldg. B SM Megamall (tel. no. 633-9953) or at the Anson Arcade Makati (tel.no. 887-0075). And for inquiries on the nationwide 3-year warranty service, you may call their DTI accredited customer service hotline at 643-3456. **ADVT.**

Hey, the bedroom might get jealous.

Featuring, the most elegant and stylish line of 100% Italian-made built-in cookers, you may never want to leave your kitchen again. Visit our showroom or call our Ariston Kitchen Consultant at 631-8282 or 887-0075 for more of Italy's number one name in kitchen appliances.

MB 91 (IX): Multifunction oven 90 cm. Other built-in ovens available in 60 cm and 90 cm, gas and electric, stainless steel finish.

HC 9 (IX): Decorative extractor hood 90 cm. Other rangehood models available in 60 cm and 90 cm; slim/decorative types; white/stainless steel.

PH 941 MSTV (IX): Multifunction hob 90 cm. Other built-in hobs available in 30 cm, 60 cm, 70 cm, and 90 cm; gas and electric; stainless steel finish.

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SHANGRI-LA, Level 4, Shangri-La Plaza, EDSA, Mandaluyong City. Tel. Nos.: 631-8282 or 633-7906
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ARISTON
Italian Designer Kitchens
www.aristonchannel.com

Just a foot in the ground

By Meluchi A. Rivera
Contributor
Photos by Chito Vecina
Pictorial direction by Albert Avellana

HE calls it his little pied-a-terre-literally, a foot in the ground–in Manila. This art dealer, who now spends most of his time in the south of France, has transformed 150 square meters of a modest building in a near-decrepit area of the metropolis into an oasis of style and chic.

One is welcomed to this flat by a massive framed wooden door, which immediately sets the place apart from its nondescript surroundings. Indeed, one enters and is transfixed–this could be a flat in New York, Milan or Paris. That is, until one walks out to the veranda and catches a glimpse of the plastic sign of a distinctly Filipino appliance store across the street.

Clean and spare

The doors alone have quite a story to tell. Starkly simple, made of solid Philippine *narra*, these were specially built and installed for the flat. The homeowner had fallen in love with the huge doors that graced old Paris flats, and had all of his doorways raised nearly to ceiling level. The sheer mass of the doors, contrasted with the flat's clean white ceilings and walls, gives the impression of height and lends the space a very urbane feel.

He likes to mix Filipino pieces with finds from his travels in France; but has kept to clean and spare lines for his flat's fixtures and large pieces of furniture. A humble Art Deco chair–by Tolentino, a noted Bulacan furniture-maker of that era–graces the entrance. This is teamed up with a game table that the owner carted from France. The living room set is a fine example of workmanship from the Focolare carpentry shop, a non-profit group that employs out-of-school youth.

The paintings also have simple frames, or are hung as bare canvasses. Works of noted Filipino and French artists hang nearly unadorned, these set off by thoughtful placement and grouping. In the living room, for instance, a muted Gus Albor from the 1980s is flanked by two works in vibrant red by a young artist. The opposite wall displays four prized originals by Alexandre La Couleff, whose illustrations of Japanese and Chinese costumes also hang in French museums. Near the doorway to the bedroom, an odd corner gains prominence with the addition of a colorful Popo San Pascual and another Gus Albor, this one a 1980s mother and child.

DYNAMITE combination. Lee Aguinaldo's painting, a crystal lamp by Crystallerie c.1950s and a French mahogany, turn-of-the century cabinet.

Early 20th century finds

The whole space is lent another layer of contrast by accessories that sport softer, even whimsical, lines. Twisted Baccarat crystal lamps from the 1930s adorn living room side tables. More crystal lamps and fruit bowls, produced by the Schneider group in the 1940s, add sparkle to other corners. A prized possession, one that is only now coming into vogue in Manila, is a 1920 Daniel Porto *lampberger* (used to discreetly scent homes).

"I like old, used things," our homeowner reveals. "They don't make them like they used to." The effect of white, wood and crystal is pristine, but not prissy. Our owner explains, "I like to wake up and see beautiful things, but these also have to be low-maintenance. I was never into tassels or froufrou, even when it was all the rage in the early 1980s. Now, everything is stripped down to basics, and I like that. Simple furniture, good art, old crystal; give me that and I'm happy."

CRYSTALS GALORE-vase and ashtray by Schneider, both c. 1950s and Baccarat lamp c. 1940

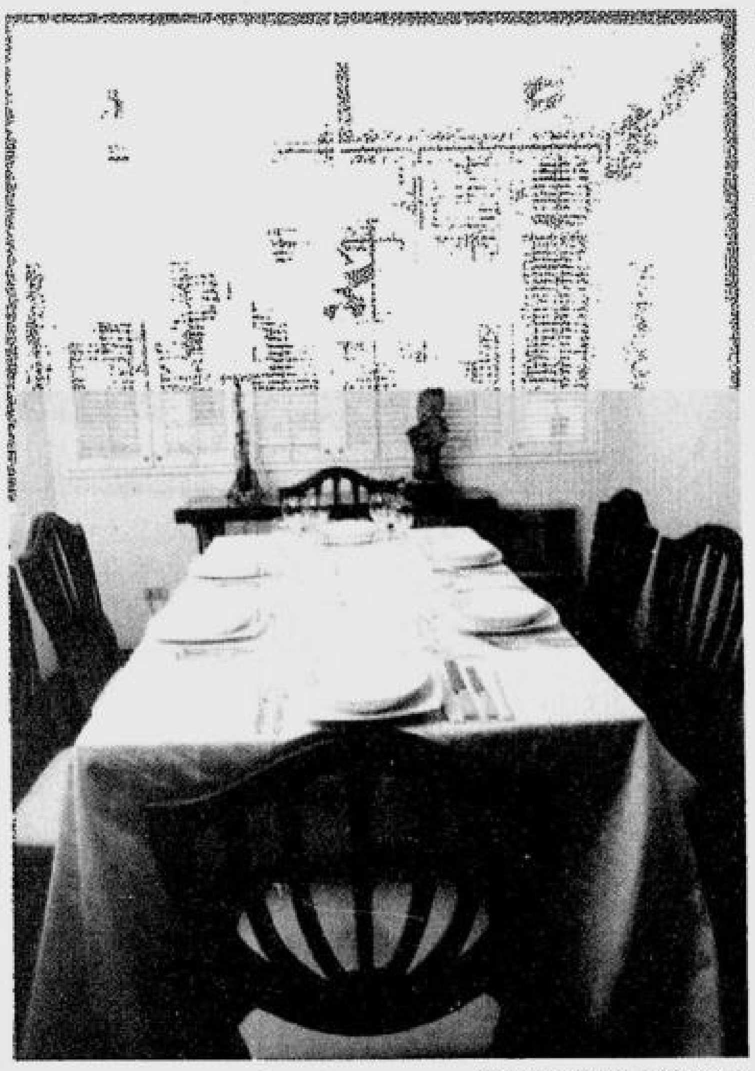
> A lover of beautiful things, he is surprisingly unattached to them. "I can always name a price if someone wants something of mine badly enough," he says.

LOUNGING AROUND. Limoges tea set and a mahogany tray, both made in 1940s, is placed on top of this 19th century *kamagong* day bed. The corner displays a painting by Diosdado Lorenzo, framed illustrations c. 1930 by Iano Cleff, postcards from Alfonso Ongpin to a Frenchwoman dated 1909-10. The French standing lamp and Italian reading lamp were made in the '70s.

The white walls are also an ideal backdrop for the art that the flat owner deals in. When this writer notes that all but the dining room walls are hung with paintings, he reveals one of his trade secrets.

"I leave those blank because when I invite prospective buyers to dinner that's where I put whatever it is I am selling." Even the buffet table does double duty: during our visit, it displays a 1920s mother-and-child bust fashioned by Graciano Nepomuceno.

"When my clients eat, the artwork becomes their dining companion," he chuckles good-naturedly. This subliminal pitch has ended in countless sales, as an art piece usually grows on buyers as the meal proceeds.


FINE DINING. A Murano crystal lamp, c. 1940s and bust by Graciano Nepomuceno, c. 1924 are placed on the console by the defunct Arte Español. The owner mixes modern china with Christofle forks, c. 1910 and knives with ivory handles, c. 1930s, salt and pepper containers, c. 1950s from Crystallerie St. Louis, France, and rare etched glass.

Business and family ties keep him rooted in Manila, but it is St. Tropez that he calls home. "I live on the nicest beach in the nicest little village in France," he gushes. The owner's Francophilia started in 1977, on his first visit of Paris. "It was like the beginning of my education, my maturity," he explains. There, his passion for the arts grew, surrounded by beautiful architecture, the thriving theatre scene, and the palpable sense of history in the air. "Here in Manila, you exist; in Europe, you live!"

800 postcards

He laments the cavalier attitude that Manila's citizens have toward history.

"The French are great collectors, hungry for any vestige of the past," the flat owner notes. "Here, we tear down old buildings. I feel bad because those are our links to our past."

Ironically, his collection of antique Philippine postcards was picked up during trips to Paris over the last 20 years. A few examples hang in the bedroom and in a corner of the living room, but most are in storage. He has amassed about 800 of them.

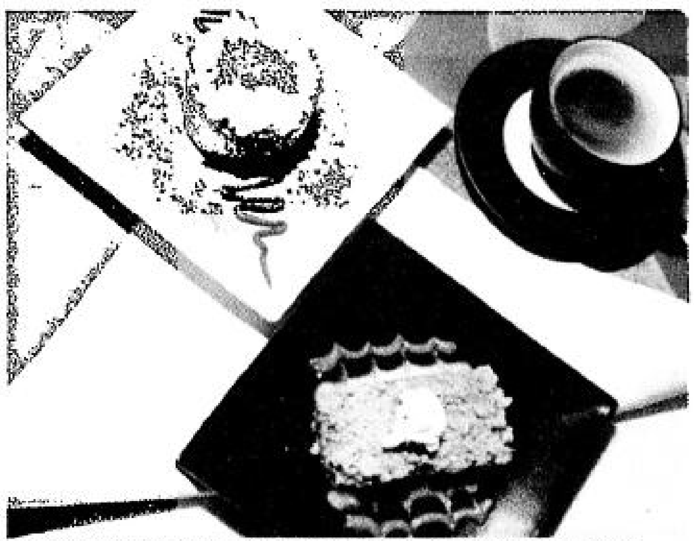
While the owner chooses his things with obvious care and precision, he is not wont to get too attached to his pieces. Even his homes are, in a way, disposable, this being his sixth one. "I'm like a gypsy. I have no permanent address," he reveals. Already, he and his partner are in the midst of moving to a seventh home; another flat a stone's throw away. This one will likely be leased out. "At the end of the day, being in my line of work, I can name a price if someone wants something of mine badly enough," he explains, shrugging.

Our homeowner does, however, have a few "keepers." For instance, he was able to secure original renderings of sets and costumes from the famed Comedie Français. These include sketches by Claude Catulle of costumes for "Falstaff," an opera by Verdi, and the four illustrations by Alexandre La Couleff.

"When I move, those go with me," he states firmly.

Those, and his gorgeous narra doors.

SALON cum gallery. Whitewashed walls, muslin shades, sheer curtains and simple salon set by Focolare provide the ambience for the choice pieces-a pair of Baccarat crystal table lamps from the 1940s, a crystal vase c. 1950s, signed by Schneider; glass ashtrays from Verlyss, France c. 1930s and an early work by Gus Albor.



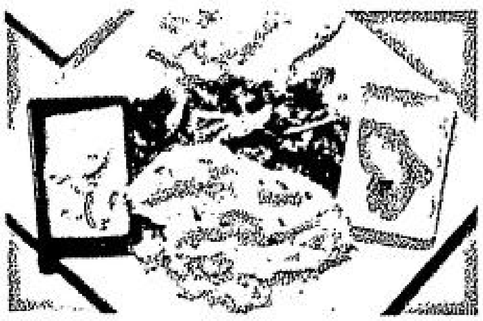
TIRAMISU and apple guava pie are laid on stylish plates from Chiang Mai. Woodblock prints reflecting different cultures are on the placemats.

Store Super is not a store but it is quite superb

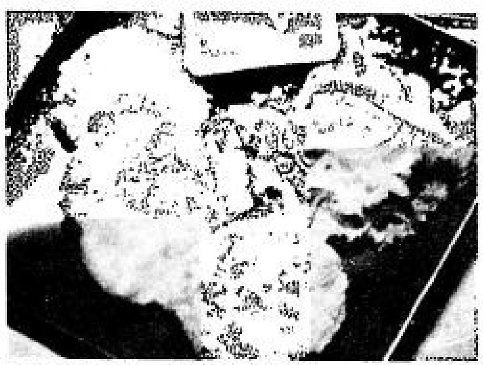
Exploring the menu in a single meal is like taking a two-hour trip around the globe..

By Amando Doronila
Photos by Chito Vecina
Pictorial Direction by Albert Avellana

WOOD-and-glass panels are treated with emulsion film depicting a collage of different cultures. They are used as dividers to create several private spaces but you can see still watch people. The color scheme consists of three shades of brown-walnut, mahogany, tan. For the walls three colors from spices yellow curry, red cayenne and paprika, orange for saffron.



LAMB *biryani* and *papadam* (India)



SHRIMP cakes (Thailand)

A NEW restaurant that calls itself Store Super-the Global Café-at Greenbelt 3, draws lunch crowds in a venue that's overcrowded with eating places. To call it a store is misleading. Its logo says it serves "global cuisine" –which is quite an accurate description of the menu–but it also considers itself an exponent of "fusion," which it is not.

Out of curiosity, a group of itinerant restaurant explorers made a survey of the range of its food, especially the main dishes, listed in just two pages of the menu card. So, selection was not much of a problem.

But first, the setting is worth mentioning. The walls are plastered with Oriental prints on glass, giving it an air of Asian mystique, suggesting "fusion." The more I read the menu, however, the more I concluded that the cuisine is more global than fusion.

Exploring the menu is like taking a two-hour trip around the globe in the dining car of the Orient Express from London to Istanbul, the trans-Siberian train across Russia from Vladivostok to central Europe, the Indian railways and the railway linking Malaysia and Thailand. Popular fares from these regions are represented in the menu.

Starters

Take the soups. You have *lentejas* soup from Spain, a stew of lentils and *chorizo Bilbao* in ham bone stock. Mulligatawny, or curried chicken and vegetables, is Indian. New England Clam Chowder, a thick hearty soup served with crackers, is something that Boston restaurants are famous for.

For salads, there is mesclun with grilled vegetables, a Mediterranean dish; spinach with feta cheese, of Greek origin; and mango salad with fried catfish chips, quintessentially Thai.

Then the appetizers. Chang Mai chicken wings with sweet chili sauce and green papaya salad is also Thai; chicken *satay*, or marinated chicken on skewers served with peanut sauce is Indonesian or Malaysian; *spanakopita*, spinach with feta cheese wrapped in phylo triangles is Greek, but I mistook them for Indian *samosas*; shrimp cakes is Thai, and garlic curry is Indian.

The restaurant also serves *naan*, a flatbread, and *papadam* or cracklings, both from India.

Main course

If you are looking for noodles, there is linguini with wild mushrooms, Italian; Paad Thai with chili, crushed peanuts, chives and egg; Mee Siam, spicy noodle from Singapore; and *fusilli* with grilled vegetables , tossed in anchovy-garlic oil, again Italian.

For the main dish, what could be more English than fish and chips? From Creole America, specifically New Orleans, the restaurant offers blackened catfish with bastardized tomato-mango salsa, and creamed sweet potato. The Japanese input is grilled salmon teriyaki. Very, very Indian is royal butter chicken served with *basmati* or fragrant long grain rice.

Hainanese chicken rice, a Singaporean specialty, is popular here.

There are also grilled Hanoi pork chops served with vegetables and nuc nam cham sauce (*patis*); green chicken curry from Thailand; braised Korean beef served with *kim chee*, radish, spinach, bean sprouts and rice; *filetto al Burro*, fillet of beef cooked with lots of garlic and olive oil, Italian; and lamb *biryani*, curried lamb bakes with *basmati*, served with *raita* whose cucumber and yogurt ingredients balance the spicy flavors and mango chutney, again Indian.

No confusion

The restaurant does not attempt to "fuse" or mix flavors, hence, the "personality" of each cuisine is not lost. And although the best of each region might not have been picked, at least, the most popular dishes were.

One problem with such a wide array is that you have to know exactly what you want, because different flavors confuse the palate.

In wine tasting, you try a small amount, roll it in your mouth, and spit it out. You can also take time between bottles, giving your taste organs time to recover and identify one bottle from the next.

You can't do this with food; you can't spit it out. If you have several dishes in one meal, there will come a point when you no longer know that you are eating.

Top choices

In Store Super's motley array, my top choice was blackened catfish, the Creole specialty. The fish was imported. It was succulent, and the Cajun-style sauce enhanced its flavor.

The grilled salmon teriyaki was excellent, too, probably because of its marinade-and it was grilled pink. Lamb *biryani* captured some of the essence of the authentic dish. I also liked the braised Korean beef because the meat was tender from slow cooking, but the *kim chee* was not strong and pungent enough.

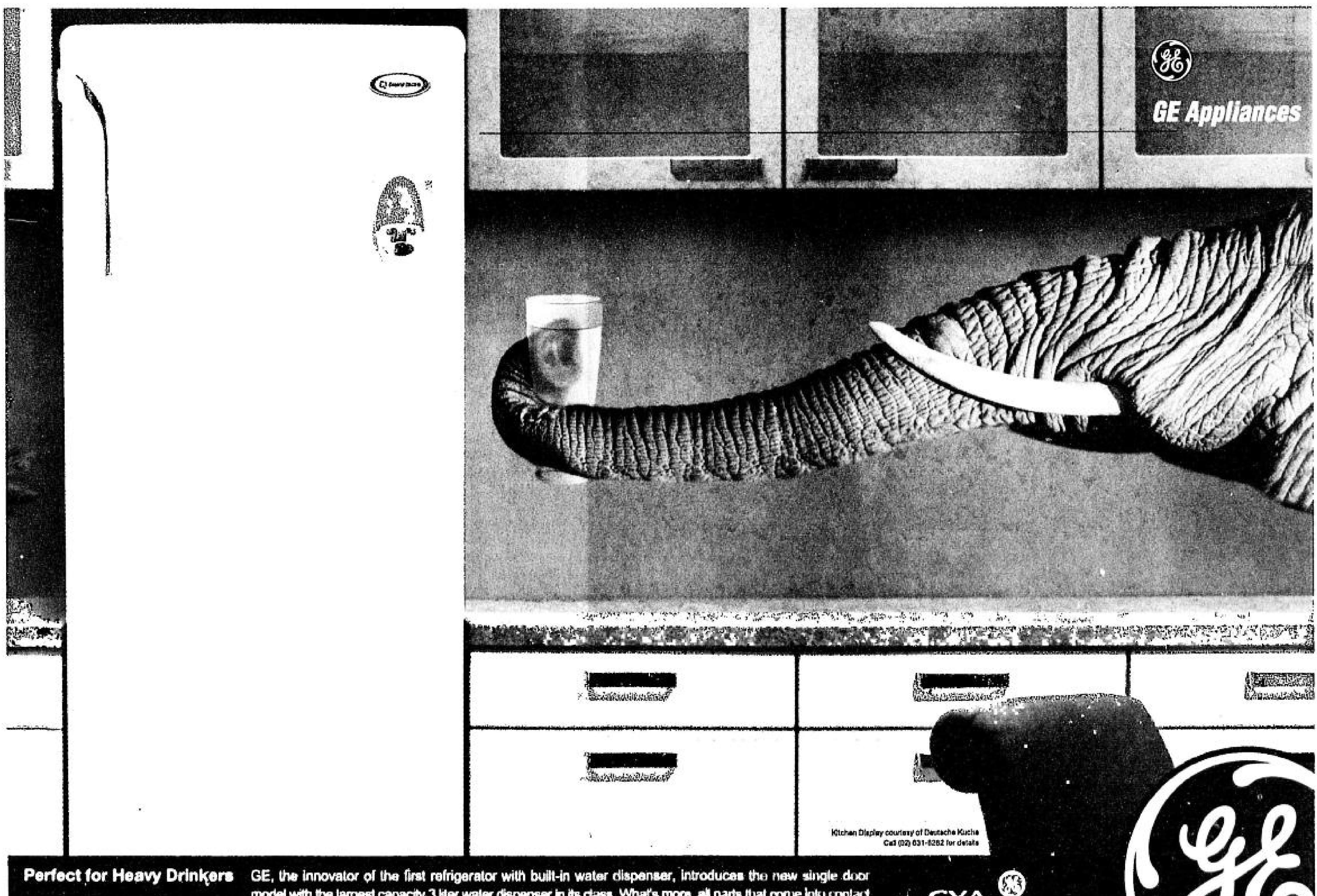
I was told lamb biryani is also one of the three most popular, the other two being Hainanese chicken rice and *filetto al Burro*.

Surprisingly, this eclectic mix on a single menu is the product of an imaginative and innovative Filipino chef, Belleza Policarpio, a native of Pampanga who has not traveled overseas but was trained by representatives of the California Culinary Academy.

Fortunately, the chef has not fallen into the spell of fusion, which often results in confusion and identity crisis. Eclecticism is what this restaurant is about, but for your own sake, try a few dishes at a time.

Service is quick, but the restaurant does not know how to present bread: it cuts the baguette into thin slices like salami. This is a turn-off.

STORE SUPER IS ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF GREENBELT 3, AYALA CENTER. TEL. 728-1317 AND 757-4906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DR. Daniel Vasquez and Manoling Collantes

PAING and Mely Hechanova, Johnny Litton

BABY Cruz, Isabel C. Suntay, Benno Dilsner, Isa C. Suntay-Dilsner and Manoling Cojuangco

MILLIE del Rosario, P.L. Lim, Menchu Concepcion, Nene Quimson and Raul Concepcion

ALESANDRA Eduque, Pandot Ocampo, Chuchu Madrigal-Eduque, Juan Miguel Vasquez

PITOY Moreno

AMBASSADOR Bienvenido Tantoco, P.L. Lim and Rico Tantoco

LIDING Oledan, Imelda Marcos and Chloe Romulo-Periquet

BEA and Jaime Zobel

MENCHU Katigbak and Susie Bayot-Ortigas

A feast of delights

From the guest list, to the food and the setting, this birthday party was a showcase of the hostess' legendary attention to detail and exquisite taste

BUSINESSWOMAN, philanthropist and socialite Consuelo Madrigal Collantes isn't one of Manila's favorite hostesses for nothing.

Close friends and relatives describe her parties as "casually elegant" and "effortless." That is, nothing is forced or contrived.

At her residence, an informal dinner becomes a great moment, with the perfect balance of attention to detail, exquisite taste and nonchalance. A special event never fails to evoke Old World charm, just like the recent birthday party she hosted for her youngest sister, **Ma. Luisa** or "Ising," who is in the real estate business and married to **Dr. Daniel Vasquez.**

The dress code was casual chic. The Old Guard was distinguishable from the rest with their relaxed dressing. For accents they wore only their precious stones, encrusted with pavéd diamonds. Members of the Madrigal family, especially, came in their most laid-back wear.

Margarita Fores of Cibo catered the party. She served her signature Filipino-Western fusion dishes. For cocktails, guests munched on fried squash flowers and oyster mushroom dipped in anchovy cream, *chorizo de bellota* croquettes, Fores' famous *barquillos* filled with chive mousse and topped with salmon roe, *frico of parmegiano* with shitake mushroom and watercress, and Parma ham in *chico* purses. Photographers took advantage of the occasion to take pictures of the intensely private Vasquezes.

Garden setting

Dinner was served in the garden. Some guests preferred the coziness of the tents, while others preferred to eat under the stars. The tables were covered with silk damasks, adorned with roses in delicate urns, and lined with trays of Cibo's signature baked artichokes and sun-dried tomato dip with crostini rounds, and baked asparagus with grilled flatbreads and Gruyere dip. Atop the center table was a layered mocha-butter cream birthday cake by **Marta Matute**, with gold-leaf baroque design and set on a bed of red rose petals.

The buffet table was a feast of delights. There were three kinds of pasta–a seafood pasta with crabs and scallops, creamy penne, and a ravioli filled with truffled *paté foie de gras*. There were whole Chilean sea bass, Cornish hen *adobo* with pickled *achara* with *nata de coco* and sultanas, roast beef tenderloin, and baby lamb.

Apparently, it was not complete without the traditional *lechon* but this came with a twist. There was a pig liver sauce with red wine, and a fruity one made from guava, *santol*, *kalamansi* shells and *nata de coco* with rum, complemented by garlicky rise with pine nuts.

For dessert, everybody's favorite was mini panna cotta cups topped with glazed chestnuts.

CHITO Madrigal Collantes and Ising Vasquez

Guests couldn't help comment on how the evening harked back to the parties of the bygone era of elegance. Collantes' guest list, as usual, consisted of relatives and friends. Ms. Vasquez invited bridge and mahjong mates.

Male servants in crisp white uniforms, and maids in green dresses with white aprons, attended to the guests. A French singer provided entertainment on the stage designed by **Boysie Villavivencio.**

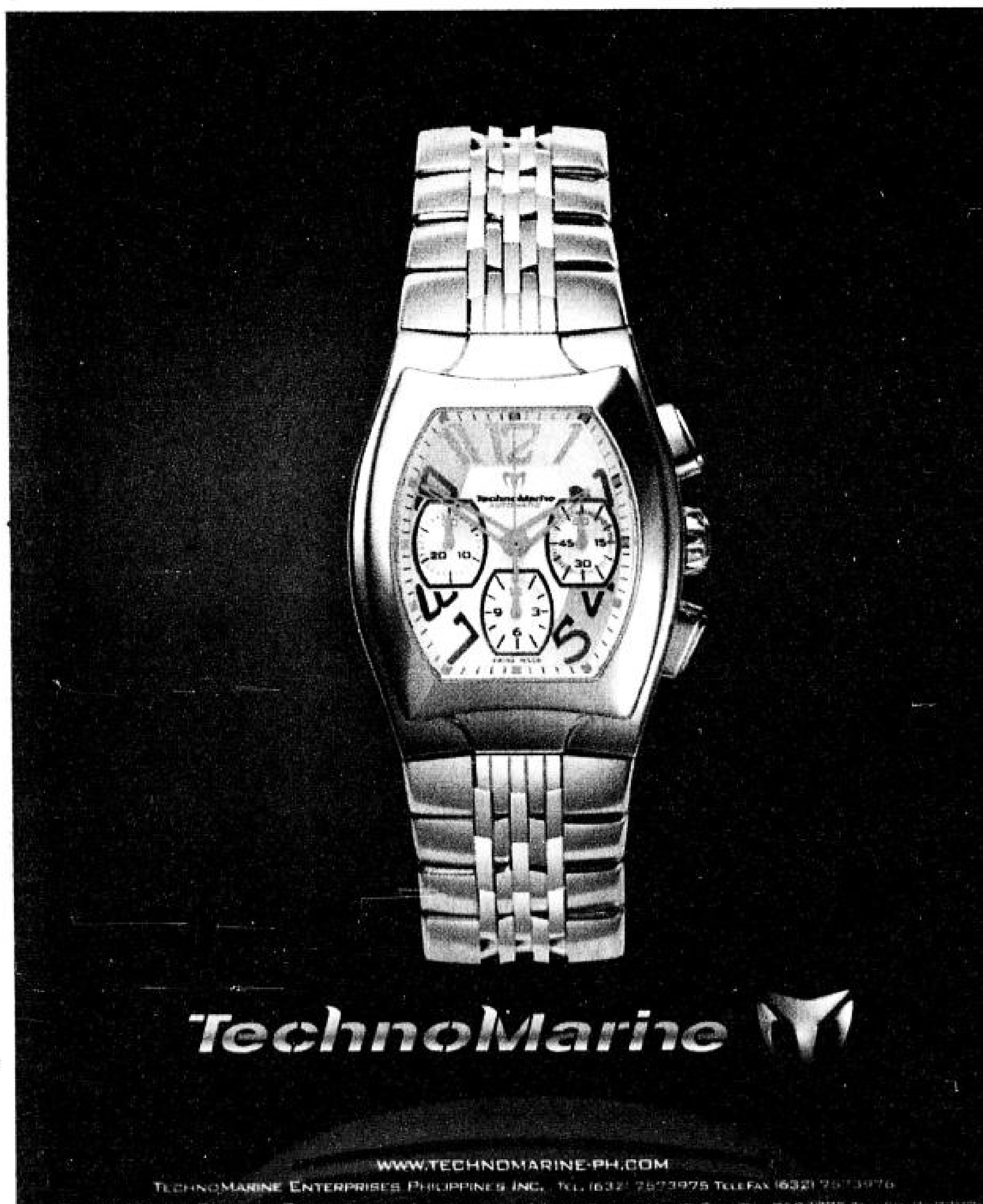
Seated at the main table, aside from the hostess and her sister, were Ms. Collantes' friends who usually met every week for lunch–**Pitoy Moreno, Nelly Gonzalez, Zita Feliciano, Nene Quimson, Imelda Cojuangco** and **Marietta Santos.** Also **Letty Syquia, Ambassador Ramon** and **Millie del Rosario.**

After dessert, they naughtily munched on a plate of *chicharon*.

As in any birthday, there were jokes about the celebrator's age. "It's not everyday that one turns 50," Ms. Collantes teased her sister.

Ms.Vasquez pleaded, "Let's stop at 40!"

Photos by Betoy Johnson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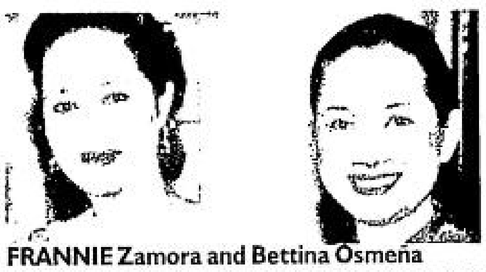
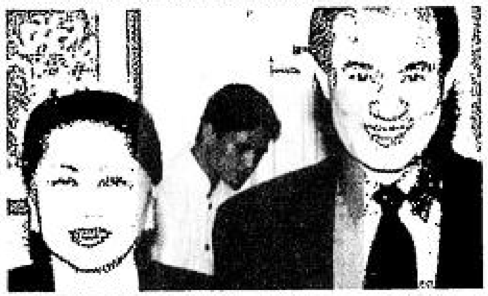

FRANNIE Zamora and Bettina Osmeña

GOV. Chavit Singson and Rachel Singson


UNDERSECRETARY Josie Lichauco and Joey Syjuco

Double treat at Tivoli

By Becky Garcia
Contributor

LAST month, Ilocos Gov. **Luis "Chavit" Singson** celebrated not only the victory of Edsa II but also the 30th birthday for his lady love, **Rachel** or **Che.**

They met at a party in Mars Disco 11 years ago while she was still a model. A common friend introduced them. He wooed her for a year, and at first she did not take him seriously.

Eventually she was taken by his sincerity and persistence. He flew to General Santos to meet her parents. Today they have five children, and Rachel is now a producer. Among her recent ventures was **Joyce Jimenez's** recent dinner fashion show.

Singson booked the Tivoli Restaurant of the Mandarin Hotel for the event. Attendance was impressive, with guests from both the government sector and the glamor set.

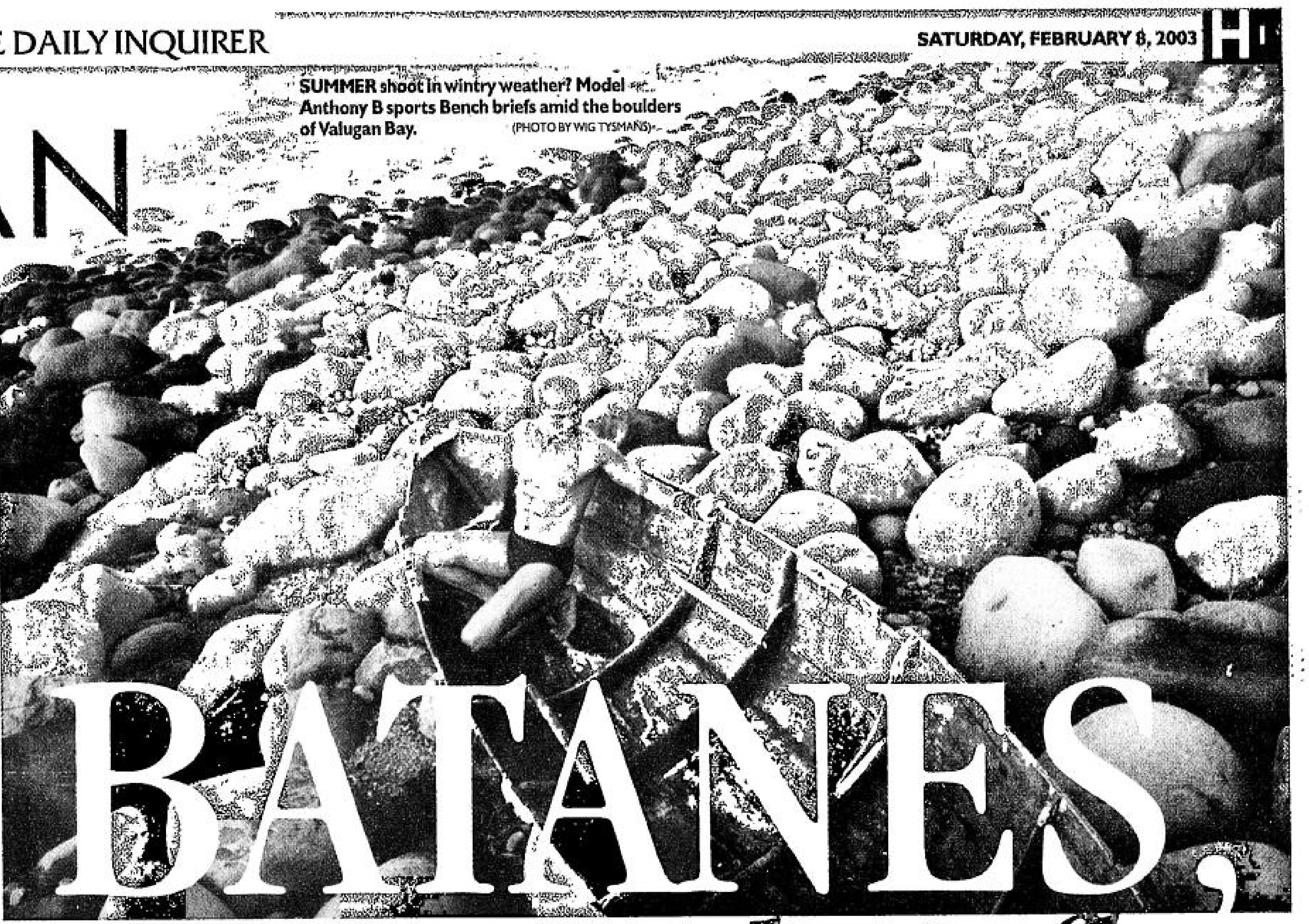
The party started with cocktails, as a string band provided background music. The four-course dinner was carefully put together with the help of good friend **Jojo Zabarte.** The Army band, courtesy of ex-Petron chair **Joey Syjuico**, provided after-dinner entertainment.

A group of Che's and Chavit's special friends-**Mayenne Carmona, Maritel Castillo, Peter Pratts, Jojo Zabarte** and yours truly–presented a surprise song number accompanied by the band. Another highlight was the dance number by Asia-Pacific dancesport winners and medalists, Junior Latin champs **Rener Mercado** and **Judith Anne Melencio.** This was followed by a mambo number by Amateur Latin champ **Bong Marquez,** Youth Latin champ **Erolle Melencio,** and **Rener Mercado** who took me by surprise and brought me to the dance floor with them.

The short program was emceed by **Johnny Litton.**

Ballroom dancing was opened by Chavit and Rachel. To the dance floor then trooped the guests, among them Pagcor chair **Ephraim Genuino,** who turned out to be a very good dancer. Other "name-droppables" present were Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office chair **Honey Girl Singson de Leon** with husband **Guy,** ex-Telecoms Undersecretary **Josie Lichauco,** Pagcor president **Butch Francisco,** Finance Undersecretary **Toto Ferrer** and **Cristine Roxas,** fun couples **Jojo** and **Henry Zabarte, Louie** and **Marilou Senn, Ramon** and **Frannie Jacinto, Bob Leeman** and **Sabrina Artadi,** showbiz celebrities **Jean Saburit** and **Peter Andersen** with daughter **Nicole, Vivian Velez** and **Tuvia Levi, Anna Marin** and husband **Jing Espiritu, Eddie Marcelo** and **Maritess Revilla, Iñaki** and **Ana Ugarte, Eva de Koenigswarter, Renzy** and **Tess Padernal, Sonny Tanchangco** and **John Gaddi, Maj. Jun Versosa, Elizabeth Csurgai, Lito Zaragoza, Armand Santos, Chacha Camacho, Kitty Kierulf, Martin Gallaga,** French businessman **Henri Muzzarelli, Jack Rodriguez, Mari Burao, Bettine Osmeña, Fritz** and **Sharon Azanza,Wopsy** and **Ajil Zamora, Louie** and **Froi Kierulf**

ÉLAN



SUMMER shoot in wintry weather? Model Anthony B sports Bench briefs amid the boulders of Valugan Bay. (PHOTO BY WIG TYSMANS)

BATANES, ever so briefly

By MARGE C. ENRIQUEZ

"WELCOME to the Land of No Return!" Batanes Governor Vicente Gato greeted us mischievously when we paid him a courtesy call at his colonial-style office.

Three weeks ago, Elan brought a team of models, stylists and photographers to his province at the northernmost tip of the country for a series of fashion shoots, and a chance to see for ourselves, among other things, that flight schedules here were no longer as unpredictable as the weather.

Gato recounted that when Philippine Airlines used to have mercy flights to Batanes, the management imposed a rule that an incoming plane was not to land in Basco airport if the wind velocity was more than 12 knots. Instead, the aircraft should head back to Luzon and return when the weather was better. Those were the days when visitors could be stranded for days, even weeks.

Naysayers said January was not a good month to shoot in Batanes, as the mini-archipelago was laden with scarves of fog at this time. They said the colorless skies were bound to be filled with swollen clouds, and that the sun played an endless game of hide-and-seek. Moreover, they warned, the quirky play of light and drizzle would definitely be a nightmare for any photographer.

Robust winds, chiseled cliffs, rolling hedgerows that formed terraces on the hills, dark sea and thundering surf, and waves that draw wide margins on the shore like lace hems--definitely a place for more than a four-day fashion shoot.

But apparently in accordance with planetary design, the trip turned out to be memorable.

Aside from erratic flight schedules, one other myth about Batanes is its limited variety of food. The Ivatans have fresh catch from the sea for their meals, and except for the tubers, most of the produce are imported from Luzon.

Assuming that it was not a vegetarian-friendly place–the staples are fish and garlic–we carried boxes of fresh fruit, sesame bread and gluten sandwiches, Bench Kappe Latte and Bench Bytes, at the risk of having other passengers' luggage bumped off.

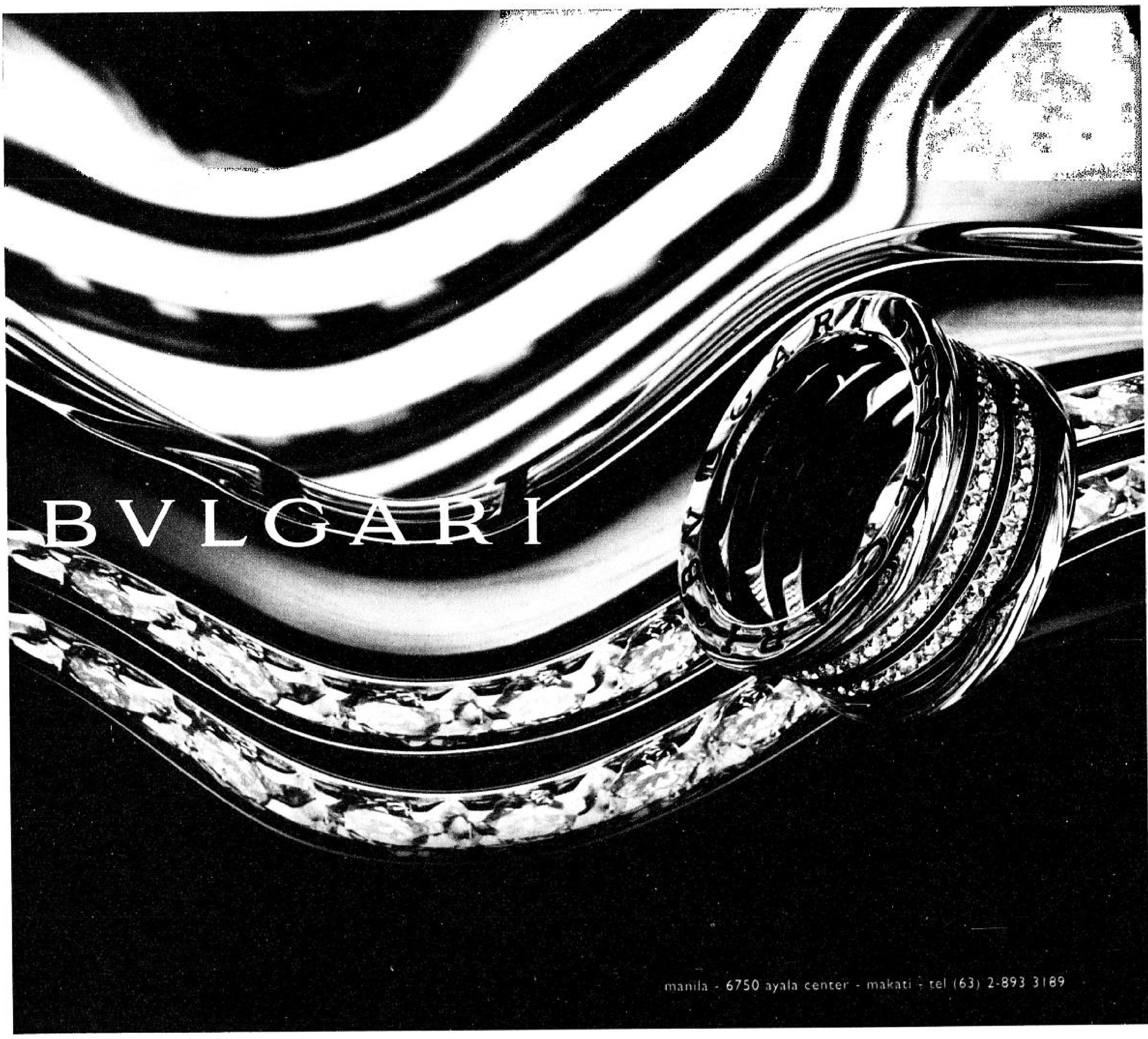
Otherworldliness

Why Batanes for a fashion shoot?

Being closer to Taiwan than to Metro Manila, Batanes exudes a certain otherworldliness. The Ivatans have consistently refused building projects that would disturb the scenery. There are no malls. There is no pollution. There's a certain innocence about the people. The children mind their manners and respect the elderly. Strangers are welcomed like long-lost friends.

Braving strong winds and muggy weather, Asian Spirit landed safely and on schedule in Basco, the provincial capital situated on Batan Island. The Elan team was met at the airport near Mt. Irayat by Batanes Congressman Florencio Abad. Noli Gabilo, vice-chair of the Batanes Tourism Council (BTC), and also a photographer, mapped out the sites for the shoot. Juliet Cataluña, manager of the Batanes Eco-Cultural Tourism Coop (BECTC), brought us around.

BATANES/ H2



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PHOTOS BY NOLI GABILO

AN IVATAN life is oblivious to the complications of modern life.

Batanes...

From page H1

Initially, photographer Wig Tysmans and art director Antonio Salac Santos, both of whom had previously been to Batanes, were disappointed that the picturesque scene was obstructed by signs of progress-power and phone lines and commercial establishments. On a positive note, they observed, there were now more jeeps and tricycles to service tourists. The governor said the locals took the bicycle to work.

Self-made governor

Our first stop was the courtesy call on Gov. Gato, who had facilitated our trip. A self-made man, he comes from a family of farmers. He told us that his father had died when he was five days old, so his mother single-handedly raised him. He recalled how he used to take a four-hour boat ride from Itbayat Island to attend school in Batan.

He finished higher studies in Manila, worked as a laborer at the Department of Public Works and Highways, took the navy exams and became an officer. He retired as a captain in 1991 and put up his own security business. Then he returned to Batanes and ran for governor. Now he is serving his second term.

"The special thing about Batanes is the peace and order," Gato told us. "There are no such crimes as kidnaps for ransom." Instead of going for commercialism, the province is promoting itself as an eco-tourism center, the better to preserve its extraordinary landscape. There are no factories, only centers producing and retailing handicrafts, such as baskets.

Cliffs and mist

As we made our way through winding roads, Batan's natural beauty unraveled before us. The sky became a rolling field of gray when high clouds blew past. Fog surrounded stony ledges and chiseled cliffs, forming a dome that hovered just above the water. We could have been in Wales or Ireland.

The best part was, since there wasn't a single major cell site, there were no text messages to receive or acknowledge.

We found that, while tourist lodges did not have the trappings of deluxe resorts, they were clean and comfortable. We stayed at the Batanes Resort, a picturesque compound of stone houses, Ivatan-style, facing the Dicoral Beach. Night manager Oscar Cataluña, who once supervised the housekeeping department of Hotel Inter-Continental Manila, kept the efficiency standards high. Towels, toiletries and beds were prepared in the same sleek uniformity as in any five-star hotel.

Yet, it felt like home. We were told we should inform the kitchen if we meant to take our meals there, because the owners needed half a day's notice to go marketing for the meal.

The next sunrise, panels of light broke through the clouds, resembling raked gold, angling from the sky to the bay, filtering through the air. Shortly after, the sun freed the hills and liberated everything into a clear day.

Our models, make-up artist and stylist had a call time of 5:30 a.m., which is the usual wake-up time for the locals. For perk-uppers, they had Bench Kappe Latte and the resort's packed coffee and sugar.

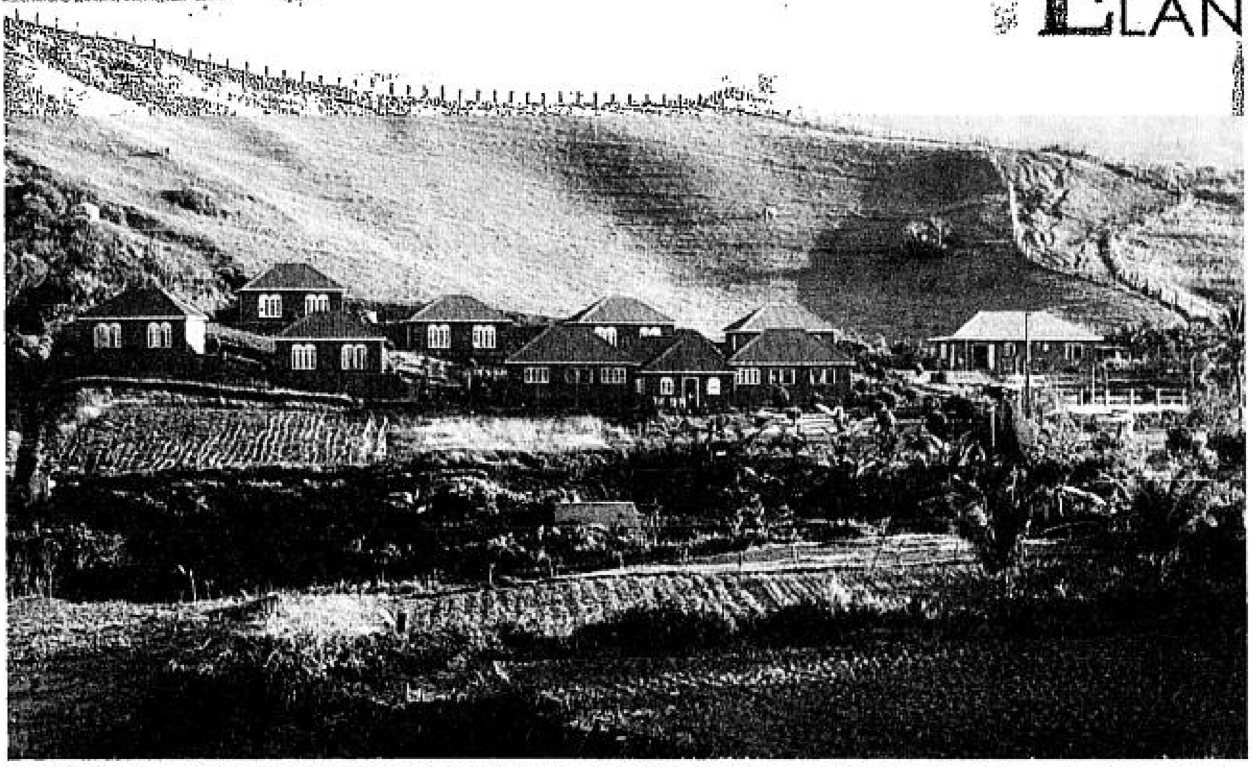
Our location shooting for Suyen Corporation's labels took us to Vayang hills and Valugan Bay. The sun had transformed the dense weather into a cloak of verdigris, with a sprinkling of quartz.

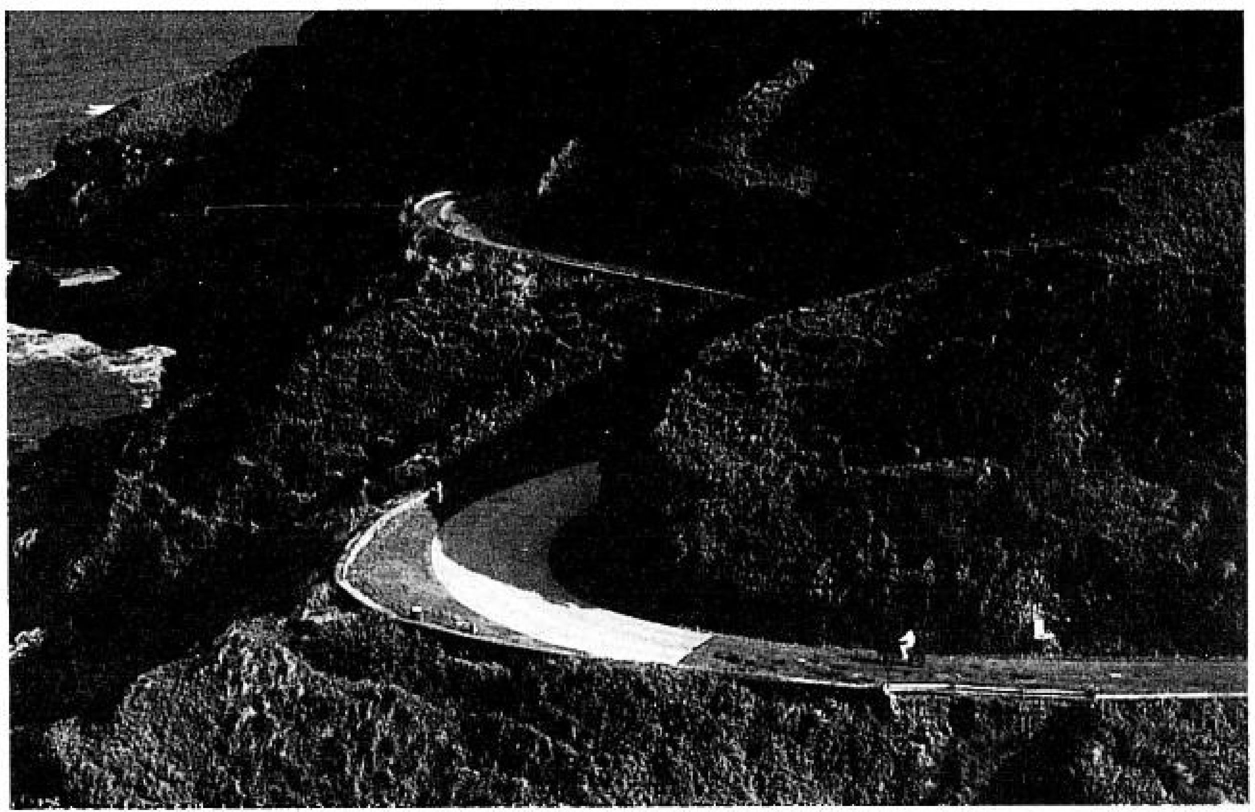
Perched on the cliffs of Vayang, we had spectacular views of the endless coast and vast horizon. We could see the vague contours of the drab precipices, and rolling hedgerows that formed terraces on Naidi Hill. Below, the dark sea and a beach laced with creamy froth.

After lunch, we proceeded to the bayside and descended the gray boulders and buttresses of the cliffs that formed an alcove. There was an eerie silence broken only by the trickle of stones and the measured lapping of the waves, which drew wide margins on the shore much like lace hems.

Our last location was a farm, where a heaving sea of grimy sheep emitted a cacophony of bleats.

All our meals we took at the Batanes Resort. While the vegetarians enjoyed their baon, the rest had three ways with catfish-poached, fried and stewed. These were prepared by a chef who wore his uniform from his restaurant days at the Holiday Inn Manila.


BATANES Resort's Ivatan-inspired cottages allow the guests the view the beaches, the sea, the forest and grasslands


THE LONG and winding national road in Batan Island

Muggy weather

By the next morning, Batanes' weather had lived up to its reputation.

At dawn, we were awakened by the moans and screeches of the wind, and the thundering surf.

When it cleared up after breakfast, we decided to shoot on a nearby cliff. But the sky became cloudy again as we huffed and puffed up our way to the site. Clouds teemed over the hills, rain trickled and the quiet wind suddenly altered its tune and began to explode. After a few minutes, the sky was washed clean and the breeze blew scents of the grass and earth.

We took a rain check, as it were, and proceeded to shoot at the historical landmarks of San Carlos and San Jose Churches, the old stonehouses in Ivana and Itbud and the Sungsong ruins shattered by the wrath of tidal waves in the early 20th century. Along the way, we took photographs among the ubiquitous carabaos.

The models didn't mind the long waits. Songs, jokes, and animated reparteé enlivened the whole morning.

Lunch was a picnic among the shrubs of Uyugan, unmindful of Batanes' plethora of vipers. BECTC's Cataluña said Batanes attracted botanists as well as adventurers. She said wealthy Filipinos went game fishing in Dura or Basco Bay, or windsurfing within view of the highway. Foreigners organized hikes on the winding roads, watched migratory birds and conducted researches on exotic plants. They either pitched tents or stayed with locals as guests under the Homestay Program. If they wanted to get around, they could rent bikes or other appropriate vehicles from the BECTC.

Marlboro Country

After a light meal of sandwiches, apples, Bench Bytes and Bench Kappe Latte that didn't need refrigeration as the weather was cold, we proceeded to the bay and picked our way up stony paths to see the pale golden sand and cocoa-colored cliffs. We slid down gentle slopes to arrive at the vast deserted beach below, leaving a wake of footprints.

Last stop was Malboro Country, which rewarded us with the panorama of the Pacific Ocean and hammock-y hills. We toiled uphill and down the dale above the now curdling waters. The wind met us at the top and, suddenly, a stampede: our fragile frames quivered in the robust wind. Fortunately, out of it we got some good shots of the models flying a kite against a setting of black clouds.

On our last night, we split in two groups. The rice eaters went to Shanedel's, touted as one of the best eating places in Basco. Food was served al fresco-okay, it was a beer garden-and, they said, excellent. The restaurant owner personally went out to sea for the fish and served his catch in the evening.

We were surprised to discover that pizza and pasta were served in this far-flung province. The younger ones went to Casa Napoli, whose owner learned his craft aboard a ship where he worked. Surprisingly, the pizza crust was delightfully crispy and the pasta offerings were varied. We had a nightcap of tepid brewed coffee and cappuccino-a rarity in the province.

Meanwhile, the young models must have been experiencing acute withdrawal symptoms from text messaging. They went to ... an Internet café (!) to send messages to friends.

On the day of our departure, Batanes Resort gifted us with seedlings of arius trees-the only kind of ornamental tree permitted to be flown out of the province-as souvenirs of our brief stay. The wind velocity had dropped from 30 to 10 knots, Asian Spirit took off and brought us back to Manila with pleasant memories.

FOR DETAILS ON BATANES,
CONTACT: JULIET CATALUÑA
BATANES ECO-CULTURAL
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CALL (098)540-0608 OR
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AT
(098) 540-0602

No fear

YOU can now fly to Batanes without fear of getting stranded.

Asian Spirit has taken over Laoag International Airlines' Manila-Batanes route. This month it will include Laoag in the route.

The airline guarantees that a plane need not fly all the way back to Manila in case of muggy weather in Basco. Instead, it can stop over in Laoag until visibility improves.

Asian Spirit uses the 40-seater CN 235 Pasas aircraft, a collaboration between Spain and Indonesia. This model is the youngest in the whole Philippines.

On a clear day, passengers can see the Cordillera Mountains and the lights of Taiwan as the plane flies over the Pacific Ocean.

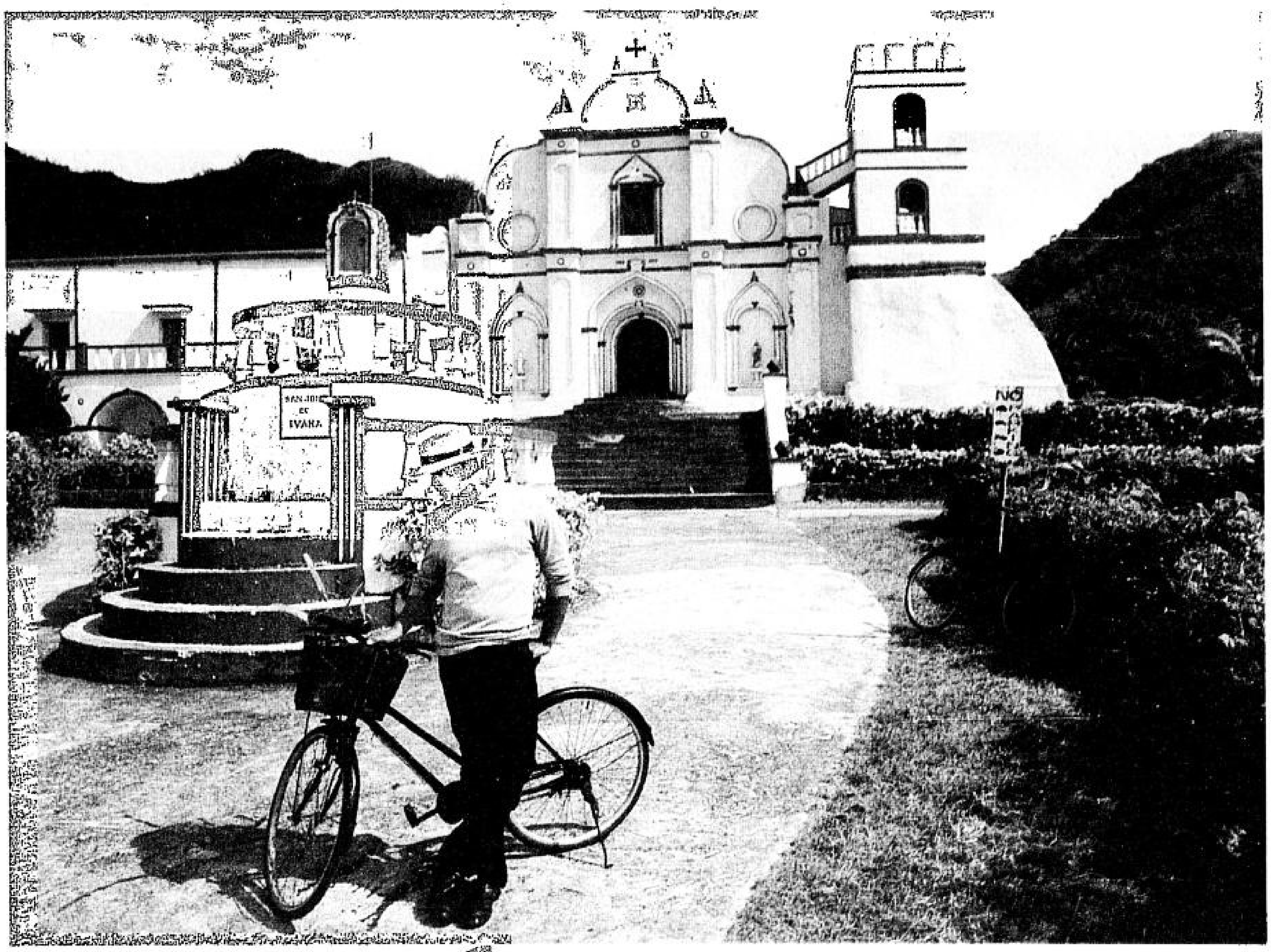
Ever since Asian Spirit began its Manila-Batanes flights (Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays) the plane has averaged a cabin load factor of 65 to 70 percent. It carries more passengers than a flight to Boracay (incidentally, Asian Spirit flies nine times a day to that island and will increase this frequency in the summer).

FOR DETAILS CALL 535-4899, 533-3444 OR 851-8888 OR EMAIL ASIANSPIRIT@BATANES-IFDCI.COM.PH OR WWW.ASIANSPIRIT.COM.

LAYERING is the fashion statement for the cold climate of Batanes. She's wearing an orange shirt, layered with a denim cut-off skirt, striped denim capris an H body bag and a bracelet customized by the stylist. He's wearing a blue shirt over a green shirt, denim pants and a scarlet skullcap to keep the head warm. All clothes and accessories by Human. More of these in a future issue.

PHOTO: WIG TYSMANS / MODELS: CLARE HONRADE, CAL CARRIES, SAQ IMRAN

STANDING on the national road in Itbud, wearing a striped shirt.



SAN JOSE CHURCH, built in 1795, is unique among the churches of Batanes. The separate bell tower with a crenalleted top served as a defense. Anthony wears a blue V-neck shirt and black tapered jeans.

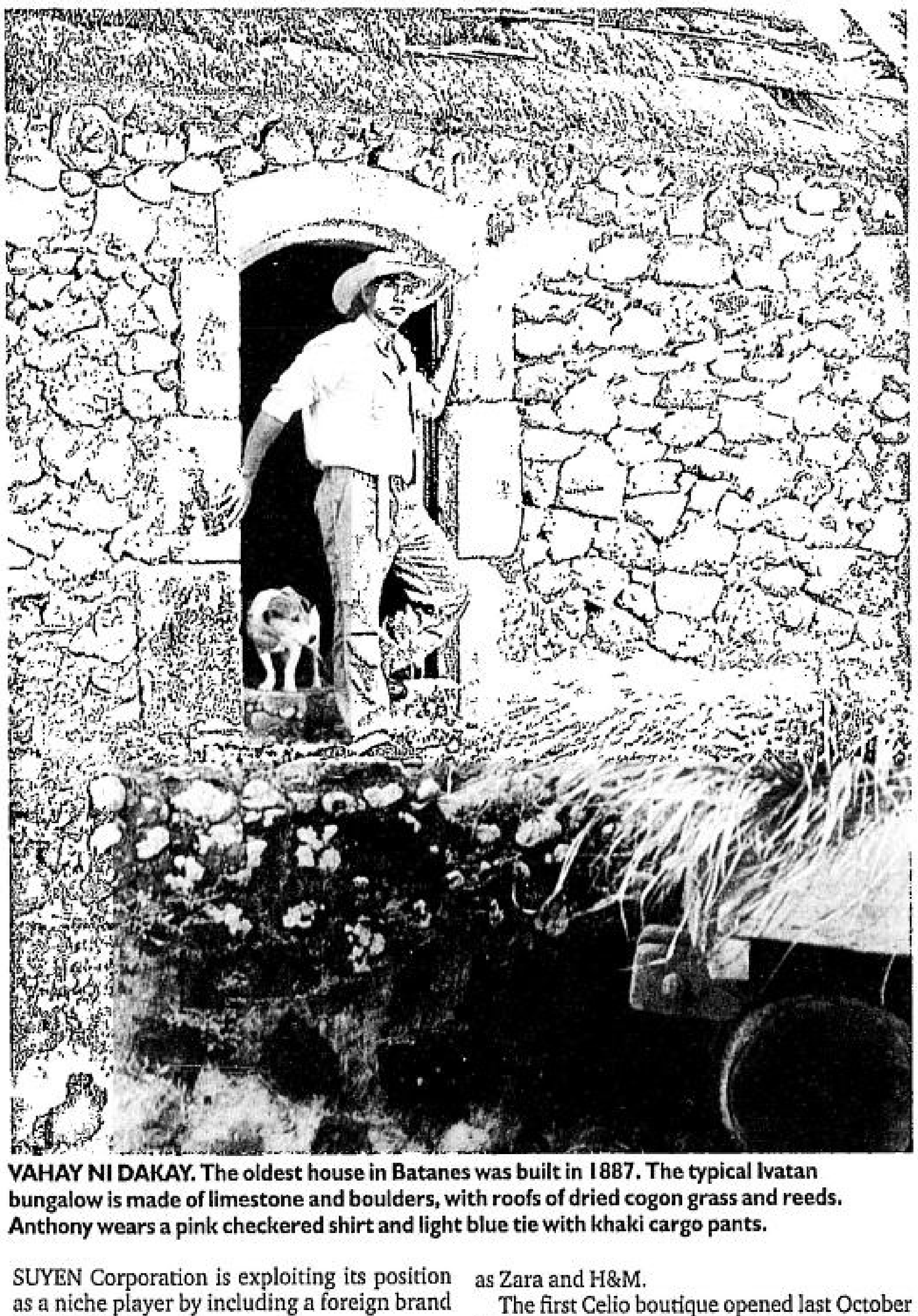
Certainly not small-time

MODEL: ANTHONY BAYATON, IDEAL PEOPLE
CLOTHES: CELIO, GREENBELT 2, THE PODIUM
STYLIST: NOEL MANAPAT
GROOMING: PEDDY ACEBO.

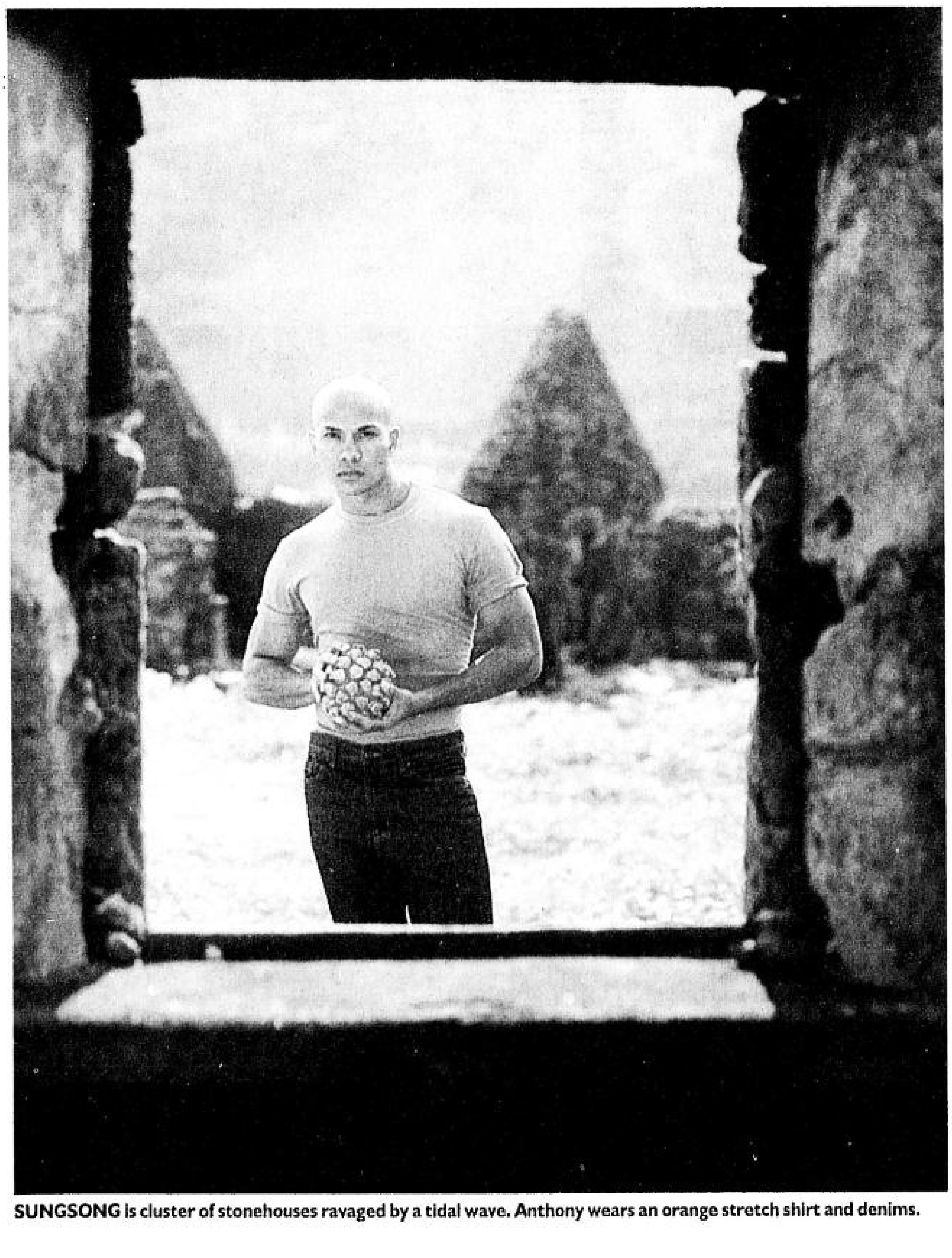
Photos by Wig Tysmans

Pictorial direction by Antonio Salac Santos

Celio, the first foreign brand in niche player Suyen Corporation's portfolio, banks on the A market which, the dealers believe, will always look for imported stuff



VAHAY NI DAKAY. The oldest house in Batanes was built in 1887. The typical Ivatan bungalow is made of limestone and boulders, with roofs of dried cogon grass and reeds. Anthony wears a pink checkered shirt and light blue tie with khaki cargo pants.



SUNGSONG is cluster of stonehouses ravaged by a tidal wave. Anthony wears an orange stretch shirt and denims.

SUYEN Corporation is exploiting its position as a niche player by including a foreign brand in its portfolio.

The company has added Celio, a French menswear label, to its family of such successful brands as Bench/Herbench, Human, Dimensione, PCX, Fix Salon, and Bench Internet Café.

"We realized that Bench had already captured the BC market, but that the A market will always look for imported stuff. We wanted an imported counterpart for Bench, our flagship. Celio's got a niche," says Bryan Lim, Suyen's 30-year-old general manager.

Lim and his uncle, CEO Benito Chan, discovered Celio four years ago in Paris when it was just an emerging brand. Recently Celio opened in Champs Elysée, where most global brands do their main business. Coincidentally, the outlet announced its plans to do business in other countries. Celio is in the league of such stylish but affordable European brands as Zara and H&M.

The first Celio boutique opened last October in Greenbelt 3. For visual impact, this two-level outlet has a total floor area of 600 square meters. Of Celio's international franchises, this one has the biggest store space.

"Celio is not a small-time brand," says Lim. "Why put up with a small space?" The second Celio boutique at The Podium is not as huge, but it is certainly spacious, too.

Sales have been brisk despite the bleak economy. The Philippine franchise made it to the global top five in the last quarter of 2002.

Satisfied clients cite good fabrics, wide color variety, sleek European tailoring, and reasonable pricing: a pair of shorts goes for P700, and pants, P1,400.

Indeed, during buying season abroad, international traders observe that as consumers become more prudent about spending, the competition has become more and more focused on offering high-image products at competitive prices.

Manila Latin and jive's Andrei!

RUSSIAN danseur Andrei Roslotsev would be the perfect DI, with his good looks, youth (27 years old), height (6'2"), dance training (Moscow Ballet Academy).

But he's too busy for dance clubs.

Andrei has nobler dreams. He wants to master the ballroom dancing syllabus, be a certified teacher and, eventually, adjudicator in competitions.

While, he's learning the craft, he teaches Latin fitness at Steps, and at Julie Borromeo's Dance Arts Studio.

Born in Russia, Andrei started ballet at age 11 as he showed potential-long limbs, muscle strength. In 1996, Philippine Ballet Theater's balletmaster and fellow Moscow Ballet alumnus Anatoli Panasiukov invited Andrei to dance in the Philippines.

Coming to Manila proved fortuitous. Andrei liked the tropical climate, which was a complete contrast to the harsh winters of Russia. He also liked the beautiful women. It was here that he met his future wife, PBT soloist Cathy Lee.

Andrei was getting restless with ballet. After three seasons with PBT, he quit and studied ballroom dancing under Australian teachers. He further honed the skills in Singapore. Now he does the 10-dance series (both standard and Latin), quite a feat in these parts.

Andrei incorporates Latin dance into a fitness program. His class is basically an aerobic activity for people who enjoy Latin dancing. He likens the class to a party where students dance continuously for an hour.

It begins with a warm-up, inspired by jazz dance movements. This consists of loosening up the joints, isolating the neck, the rib cage, and the hips. Students learn basic figures in rumba, based on drills that Andrei has learned while studying the Australian dance syllabus in Singapore.

"I don't focus on technique," he says. "I just let the students dance and enjoy."

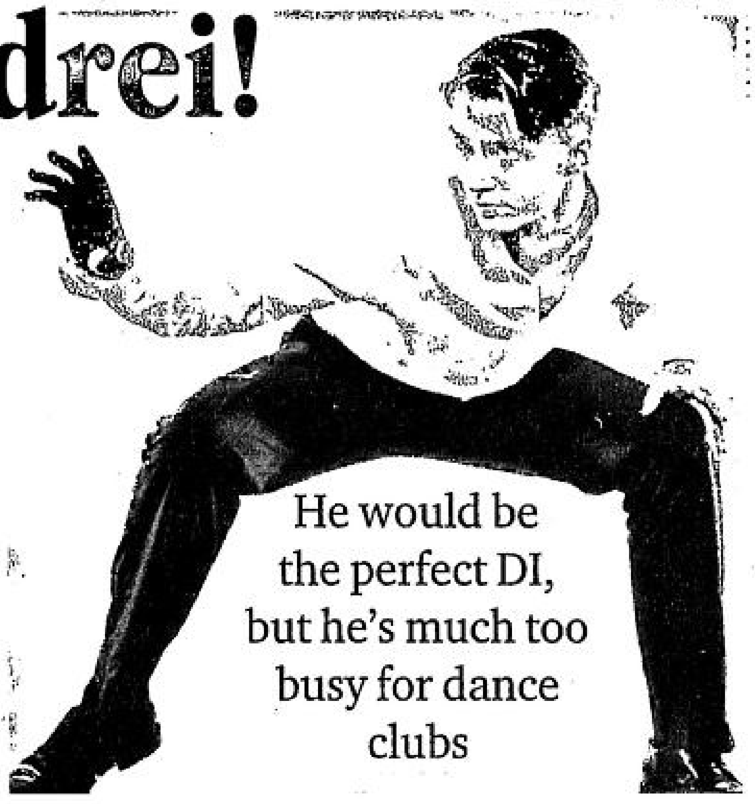
The class follows a sequence: rumba, cha-cha-cha (yes, it's three syllables) and build up to the frisky jive. Things cool down with a slow rumba at the end of the class, accompanied by breathing exercises and *port de bras* (arm movements).

Andrei explains that the dances are defined by time signature and movement quality. "The rumba and chachacha's time signature are 4/4, samba is 2/4 . The samba is sensuous, yet rhythmic. There's a little bouncing action. The chachacha is playful. The jive is derived from rock n' roll and boogie."

He extols the benefits: "The movements increase the heart rate and burn calories. You try not to let them stop for a full hour. It's good not only for your body but also for your mind. You develop coordination, sense of rhythm, and musicality. To follow the teacher, you have to use your mind."

Tired of mindless weight lifting? Try Latin and jive.

CLASSES AT STEPS STUDIO, KARRIVIN PLAZA, 2316 PASONG TAMO, EXT. MAKATI. TEL.L 843-8472.



He would be the perfect DI, but he's much too busy for dance clubs

One Sweet Proposal from Delifrance

The Heart is a Universal Symbol, an icon that needs no explanation. When you see one at this time of the year, you instantly get the feeling that love is in the air.

Since February 14 was declared as the "Saint Valentine's Day" friends and lovers undoubtedly, a number of strangers have devoted themselves to celebrating matters of the heart at least once a year and Delifrance is celebrating Valentine's with a set of delectable desserts and meals for two.

You can choose among the 143 "One Sweet Proposal" Valentine products consisting of the Foolish Hearts (Heart-shaped baguettes), Chocolate Party Trays and Heart Tart, all are available for only P 143.00.

Foolish Hearts are perfect for baguette lovers and novelty seekers. They can enjoy their favorite baguette but with the touch of love. The mini creations known as the Chocolate Party Trays are available in two packs, pack of 9 pcs. for P 143.00 and 6 pcs. for P 120.00. For sure your friends, officemates and even family members will not mind receiving one. The Heart Tart is definitely for your partner and best pal, it is not only made of the freshest ingredients but a real work of art. You can also indulge in giving the Delifrance Premium Valentine products, Large Chocolate Party Tray and Large Heart Tart for P 450.00.

That's not all, Delifrance cooked up a perfect Valentine Party for two for only P 243.00. You and your partner can choose among the Pasta combination of Seafood Marinara, Beef Stroganoff or Chicken Mushroom plus two pieces of Strawberry & Choco tarts. You add two serving of the famous Oriental Garden Salad for only P 160.00.

Ain't this the best Valentine proposal? Let your Valentine be magical only at Delifrance.

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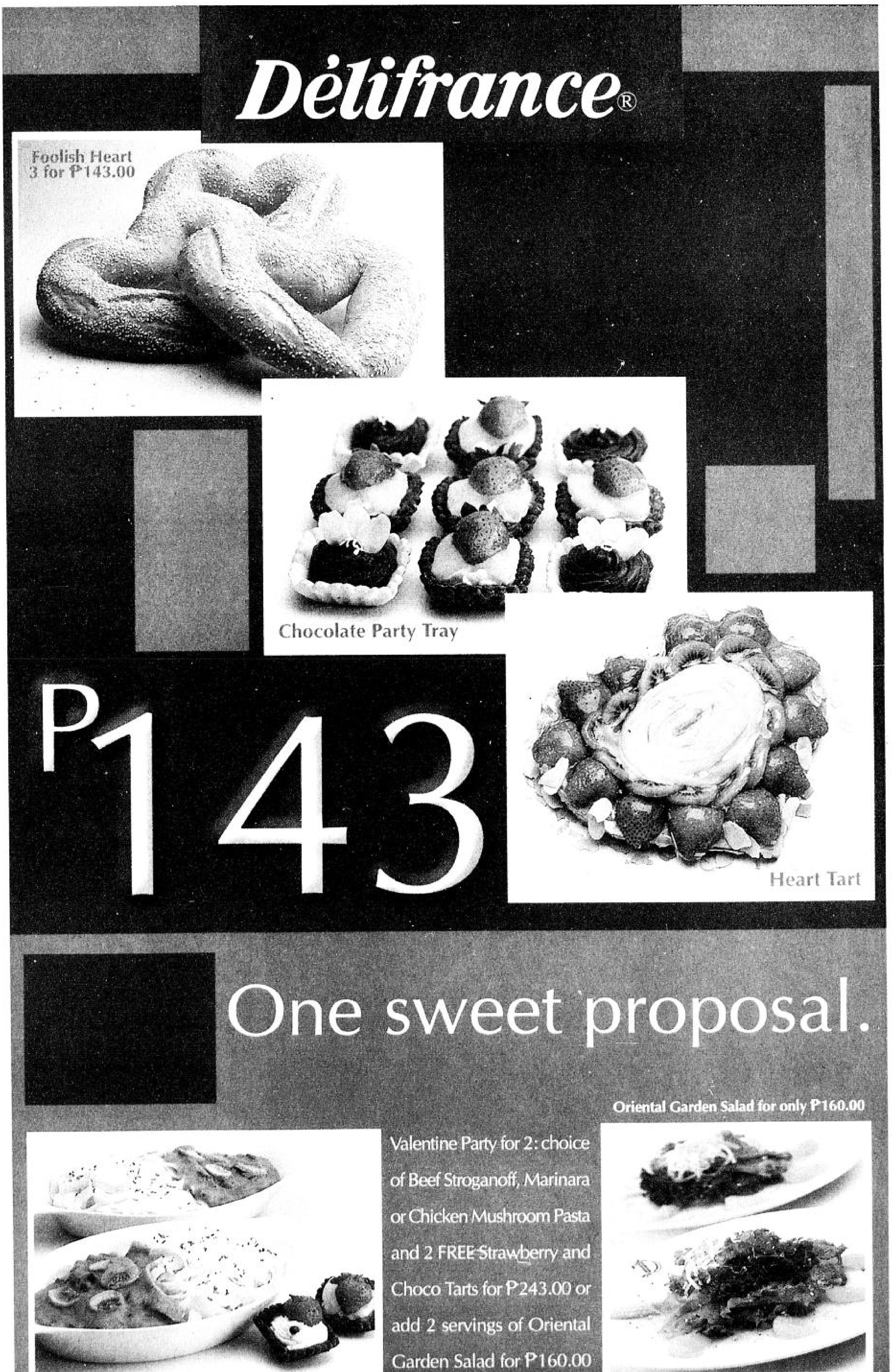

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Sitaw, bataw, patani, kundol, patola...

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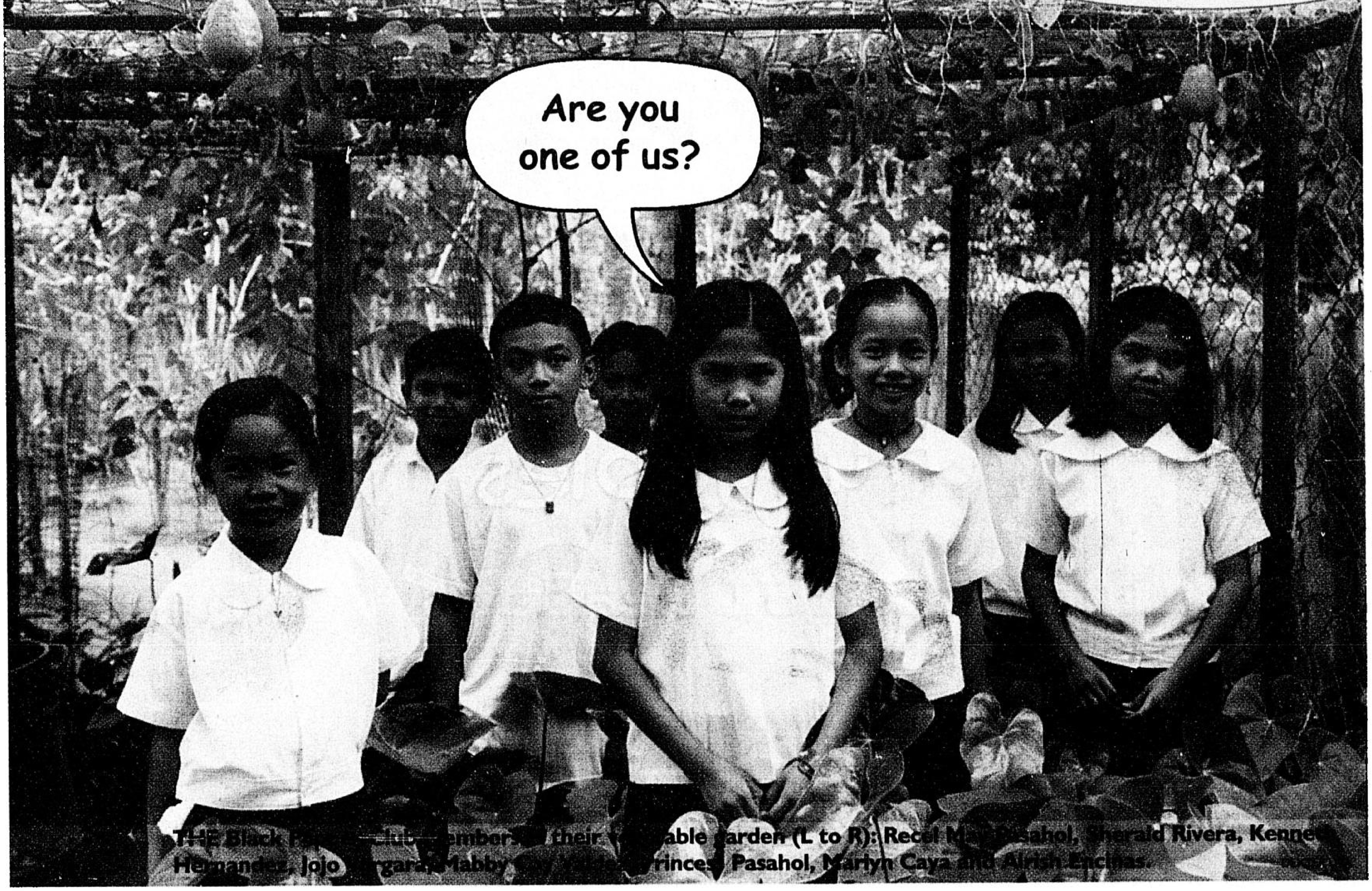

Are you one of us?

THE Black Pepper Club members in their vegetable garden (L to R): Recel Mae Pasahol, Sherald Rivera, Kenneth Hernandez, Jojo Vergara, Mabby [illegible], Princess Pasahol, Marlyn Caya and Airish Encinas.

The Black Pepper Club

Spice boys and girls are out to save nature!

By Eline Santos

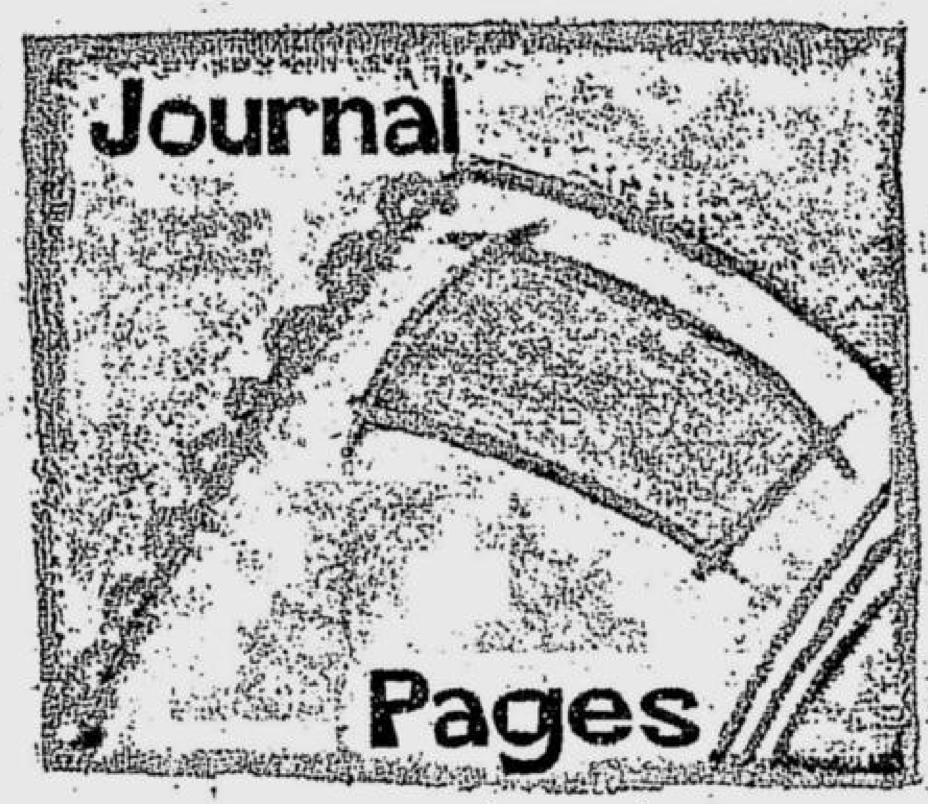
NOPE. They are not the latest singing sensation on MTV-Asia. The Black Pepper Club is a 100-strong bunch of grade school kids from Lipa, Batangas. They are a science club and they are the best in the country for the year 2002.

The humble group from Adya Elementary School got exciting news in November last year when the Philippine Society of Youth Science Clubs gave them the top prize.

This is for their club projects that made Lipa a cleaner and greener place. They cleaned a nearby river of trash and learned how to segregate and recycle trash. They planted trees, herbs, flowers and veggies. And last—but certainly not the least!—they helped their community plant and harvest black pepper.

Now, many of their families earn some extra bucks from their little

The Black/ p. 8



Bidding my Best Friend Goodbye

By Niña Alipio
University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City

I USED to hate boys. They stink in the afternoon, they are rough when playing, and well, they are just so different. But then there was this boy named Marc. For about a year, he was just someone I said hello or nodded to in school.

No big deal. Then we became friends. Maybe our difference is what bonded us. We spent lots of time figuring out why we were so unlike. We always ended up laughing.

I learned so much about people, particularly boys. I began to appreciate their nature.

I realized that boys are honest. They are direct and straight to the point, compared to girls who will beat around the bush until the message is covered with leaves. Marc is very frank. He means no when he says "no," and yes when he says "yes."

But just when I discovered what wonderful creatures boys were, and just when our friendship grew stronger, I have to bid him goodbye. Marc's family is migrating to the US.

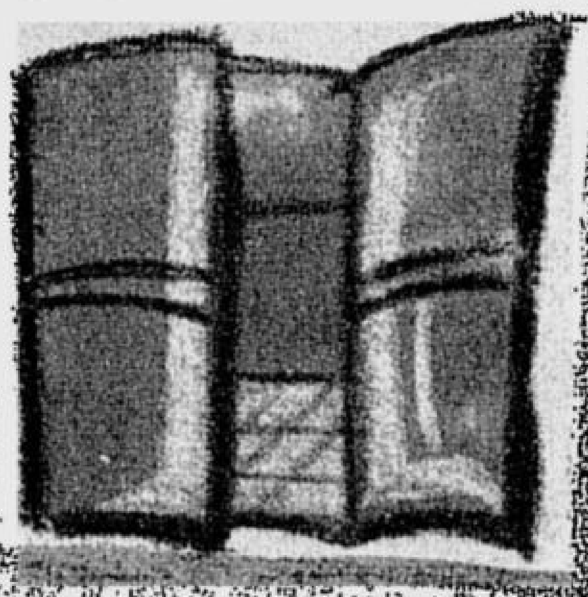
It hurts to say goodbye to my only boy best friend. But I am looking forward to some day when we will greet each other again with either a hello or a nod. The word goodbye is not so bad. It is a merging of the words "bye" and "good." My life as a boy-hater will never be the same. Thanks, Marc!

Sound Familiar ?

Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!

Straight from JI Readers

You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **ji@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



Thanks from ACT

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Thank you very much for featuring the ACT article on Jan. 25. It had the perfect timing, the weekend before their first set of performances.

The ACT cast and staff are very grateful for the space and exposure you've given them. I just got news today from my friend DR Gaerlan that because of the article, they have received invitation to go on a provincial tour and bring the play to other schools. This is a first in ACT history! There are plans now of going to Vigan after the Ateneo performances. Hopefully they will be able to earn enough funds to build their dream rehearsal room. Thank you, again.—**LUIGI MANZO**, Ateneo de Manila Grade School, Quezon City

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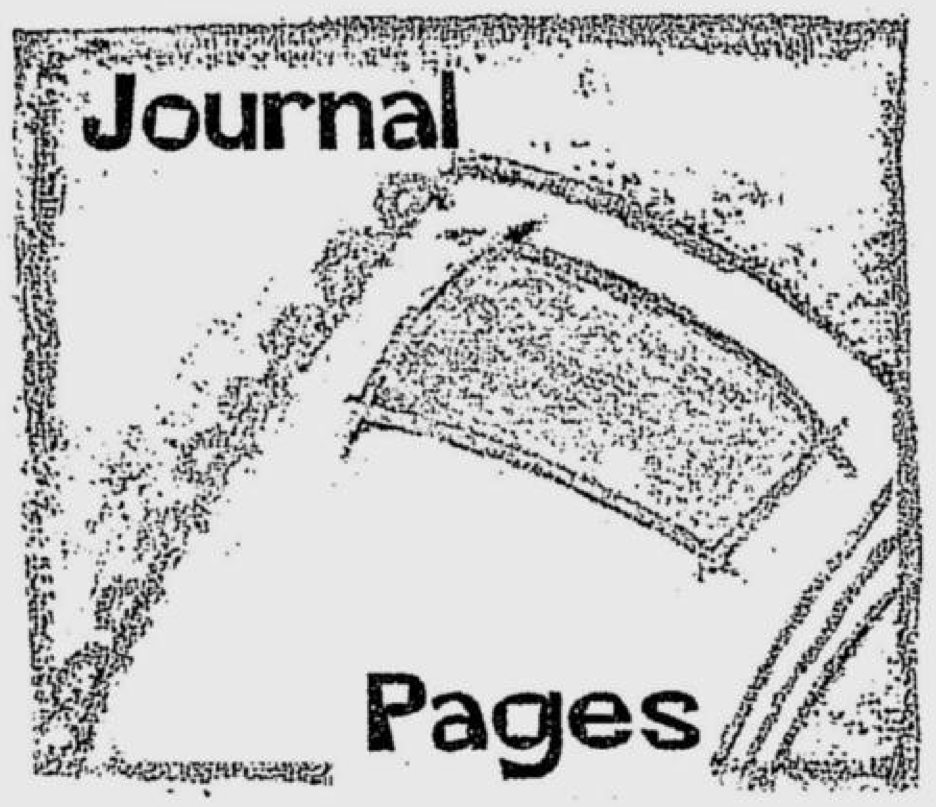
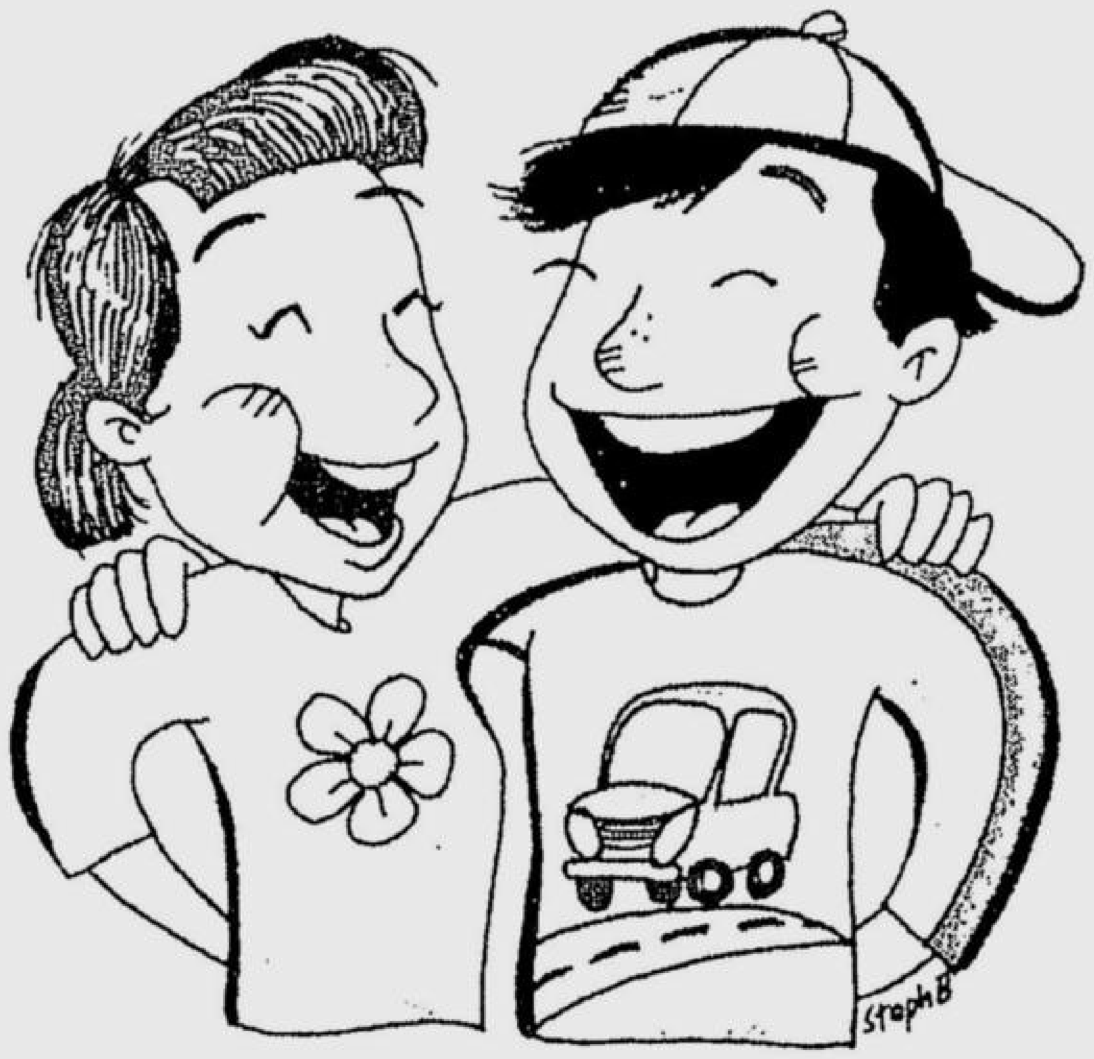


Bidding my B[illegible] [illegible]nd Goo[illegible]b

By Niña Alipio
University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City



I USED to hate boys. They stink in the afternoon, they are rough when playing, and well, they are just so different. But then there was this boy named Marc. For about a year, he was just someone I said hello or nodded to in school.

No big deal. Then we became friends. Maybe our difference is what bonded us. We spent lots of time figuring out why we were so unlike. We always ended up laughing.

I learned so much about people, particularly boys. I began to appreciate their nature.

I realized that boys are honest. They are direct and straight to the point, compared to girls who will beat around the bush until the message is covered with leaves. Marc is very frank. He means no when he says "no," and yes when he says "yes."

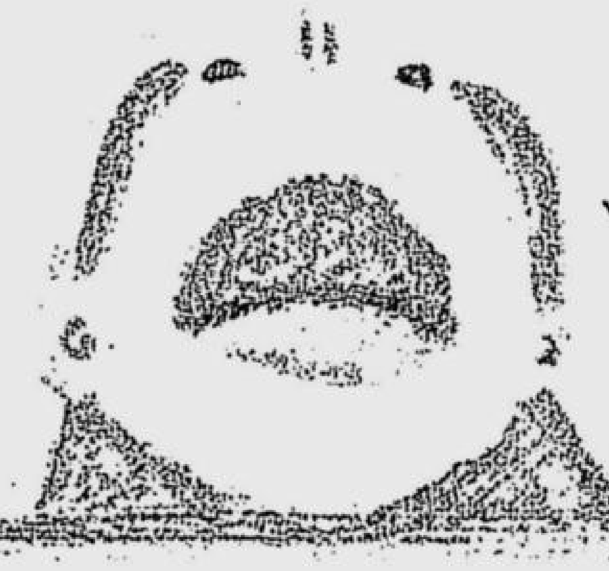
But just when I discovered what wonderful creatures boys were, and just when our friendship grew stronger, I have to bid him goodbye. Marc's family is migrating to the US.

It hurts to say goodbye to my only boy best friend. But I am looking forward to some day when we will greet each other again with either a hello or a nod. The word goodbye is not so bad. It is a merging of the words "bye" and "good." My life as a boy-hater will never be the same. Thanks, Marc!

Sound Familia

Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!

Straight from JI Readers



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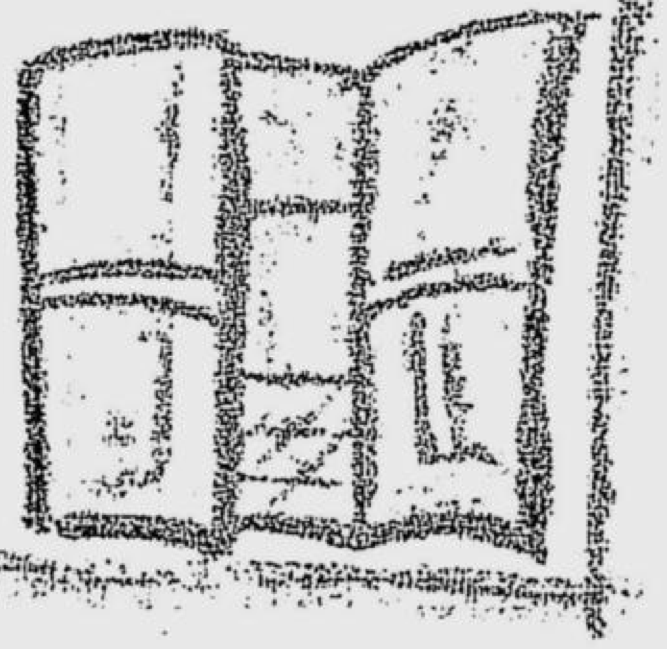

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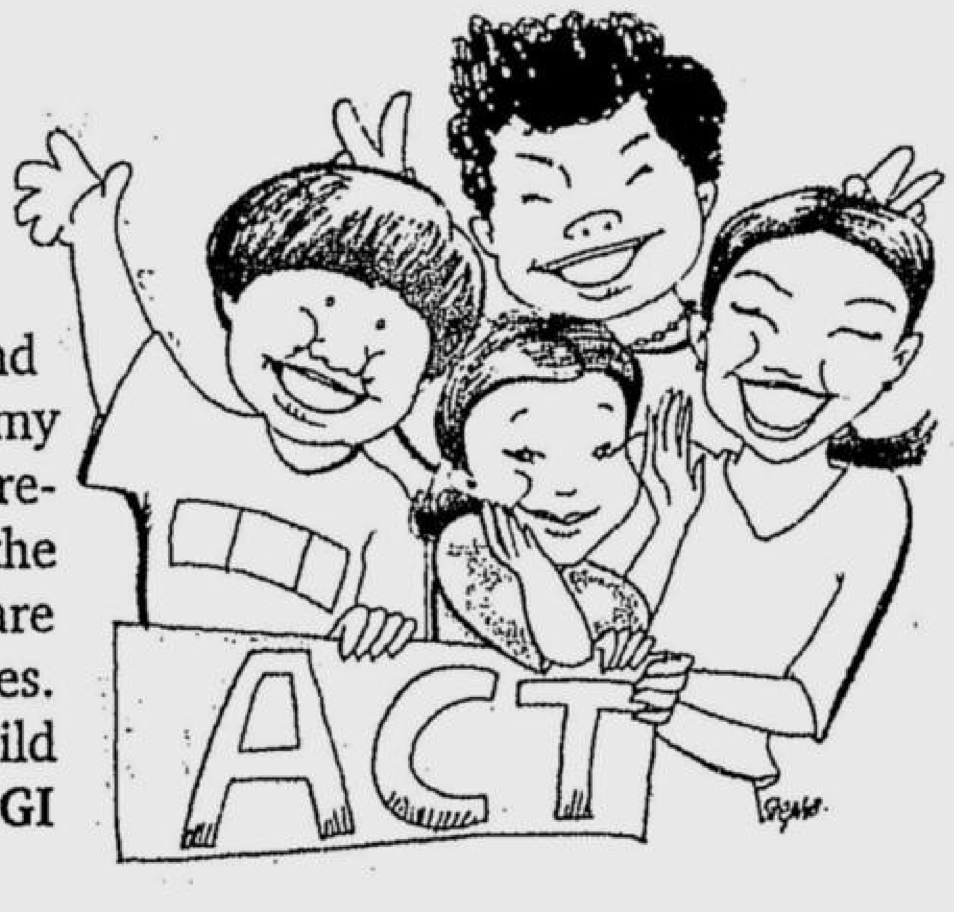

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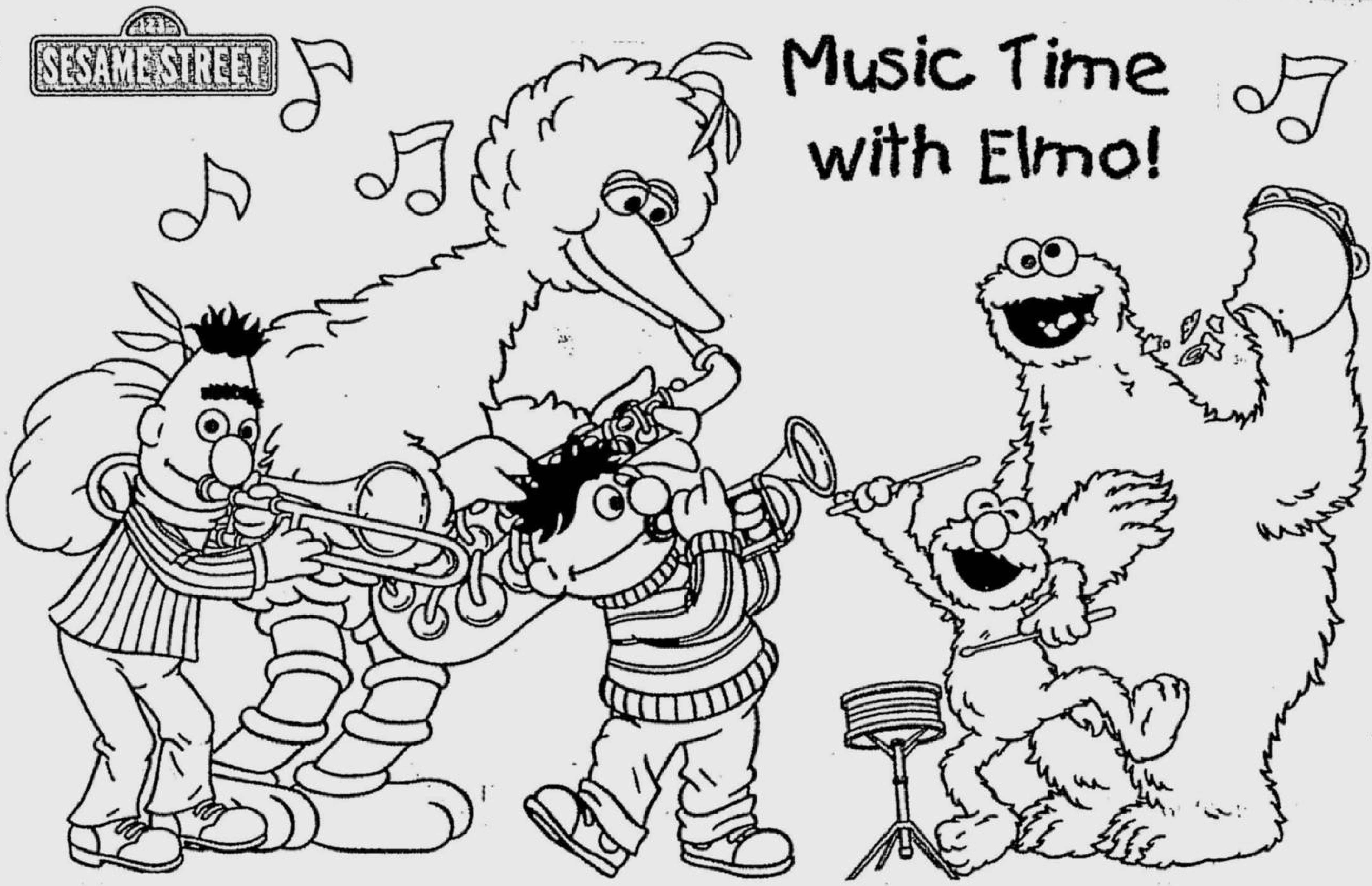
COLOR ME ELMO!

SESAME STREET


Music Time with Elmo!

COLOR THIS AND GET THE CHANCE TO JOIN ELMO'S BIRTHDAY PARTY AT THE SM MEGAMALL ATRIUM ON FEB. 23, 2003 AND WIN SPECIAL PRIZES.

Meet & Greet Elmo
at the
SM Department Store
Character Shop Section.
See posters for details.

1. Print ad coloring contest is open to kids 2-12 years of age, boys and girls.
2. Color Elmo and the SESAME STREET characters and fill-out the entry form below.
3. Send the entry form and colored print ad to Marketing Department Purefoods-Hormel Co. 21st Flr. JMT Corporate Condominium, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.
4. Make sure you submit your entries before Feb. 23, 2003.

PUREFOODS
Pork & Beans

Name: ______________________ **Age:** ______________

Home Address: ______________________ **Telephone Number:** ______________

Favorite Sesame Street Character: ______________ **Favorite Color:** ______________

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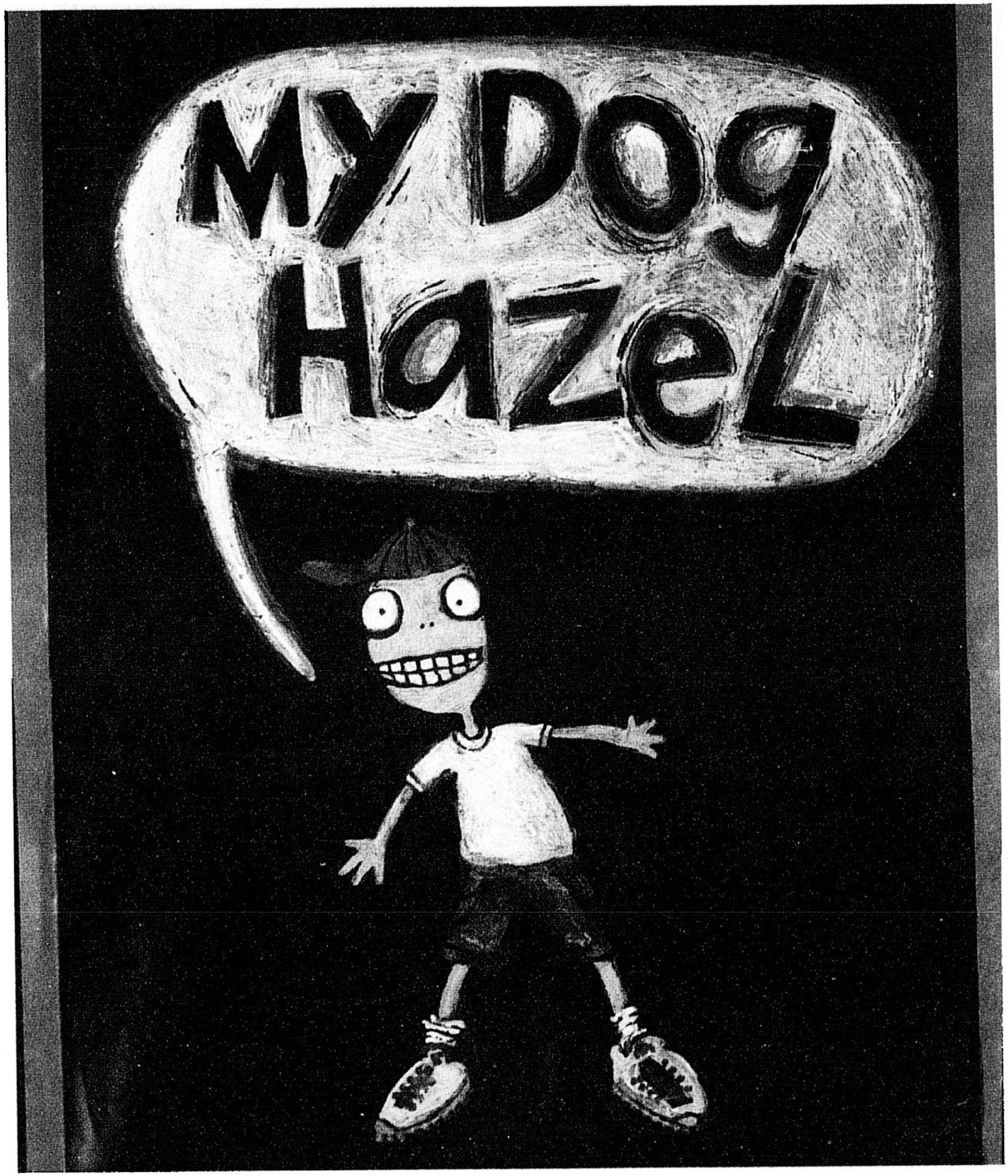
A-OK kasama sa
sarap at saya!

SM
We've got it all for you!

PUREFOODS HORMEL
The Purefoods-Hormel Company



An Essay by Juan Miguel L. Andres
Art by Lyra Garcellano

TWO years ago, as I was playing a game on my computer, I noticed how slow it was starting to get. I then found out that it was just running with a Pentium Operating System. I longed for a computer upgrade so that I could once again play on a smooth moving computer.

The moment I saw my dad walk in the room, I felt no shame and asked for an upgrade for my computer. He looked at me and said he'd think about it. He said that I might find something better.

I agreed but in my heart, the hunger for an upgrade never left. I waited for days and even weeks.

Then, when I got home from a tiring day at school, my dad said he had something for me. My heart pounded with joy as if I've won a lottery, thinking my dad had upgraded my computer.

"Suddenly, a bark came out of the wrapped box."

To my surprise, he gave me a wrapped gift. My joy lessened as I saw the package. It didn't look like a computer. As I took it, I felt like a sword of pain, sorrow and a little anger pierced my heart.

Suddenly, a bark came out of the wrapped box. I almost threw the package down. Fortunately, I held on. I put it down on the floor and opened it immediately.

I was greeted by a puppy. It was the dog I liked the most. It was a Pomeranian. This breed looks like a cat at first glance because they are thickly furred, especially in the neck area. They kinda look like a little mature male lion.

I named my dog Hazel because I love hazelnuts.

At first, Hazel looked like a hairless cat because her hair was just starting to grow. Both her ears were down when they should have been up. It was hard to play with her because my heart was still longing for a new computer.

But, as time passed, Hazel started looking like how a fluffy Pomeranian should look. She slowly but surely changed my outlook by showing me how obedient and loyal she was.

I started to buy things for her like a cage, a bowl for her food and some chew toys. I felt sorry for her when my parents bought another Pom whom they named Ginger.

At that time, all the attention was going to Ginger and I felt that Hazel was left unattended. I started to love her. She was becoming prettier and prettier, fluffier and fluffier. By the time she was a year old, she was very cute, very loving and quite fat.

My parents said that it would be nice if we found her a partner so that she could have puppies, which would grow to be as beautiful as her. My mom bought a boy Pom and named him Rootbeer. He became Hazel's mate. They were inseparable. They played a lot and stayed together most of the time. But Hazel never got pregnant.

My mom said she was getting fat, too fat to give birth. So, for 6 months, I put Hazel on a strict diet to lose some of her fat.

Finally, Hazel got pregnant and was
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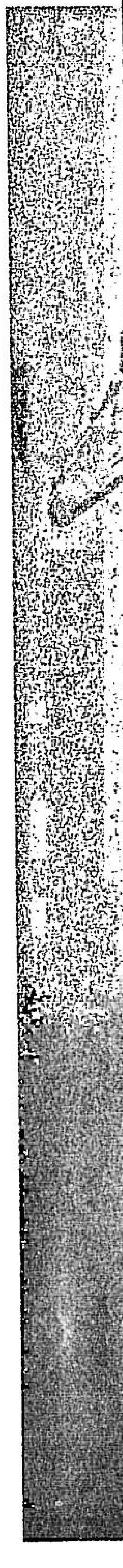
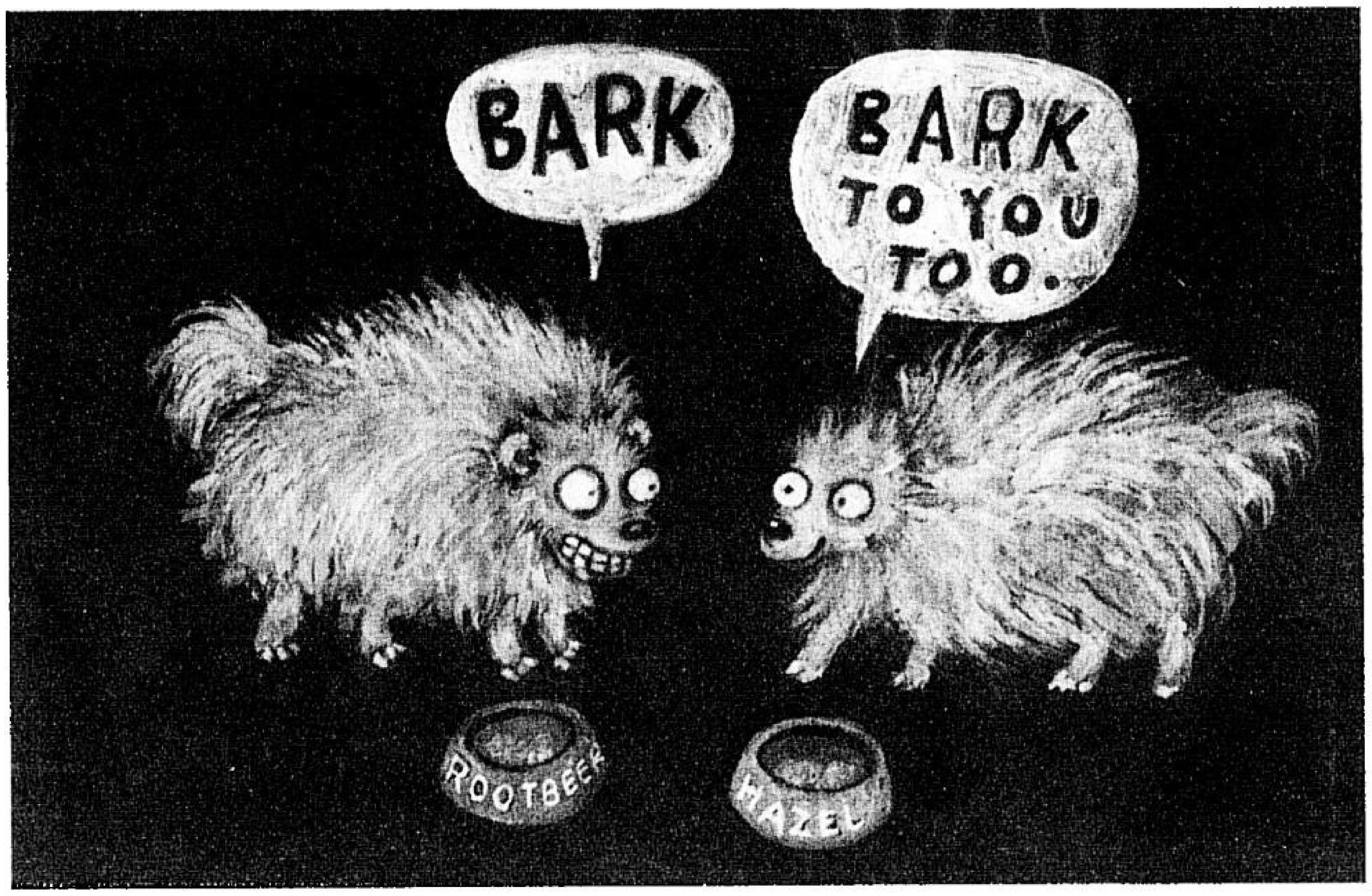


ve birth on November 3. I
t was great timing because
l have our semestral break
cancelled our plans to go
because that would mean
ng anyone to look after
y parents decided to bring
beach instead. So on Oc-
we left for Bataan.

xt day, my sister begged
o stay one more night be-
e felt that our stay at the
ns too short. I told my dad that we needed to go home because Hazel might give birth. My dad agreed with me so we headed for home.

When we got home, I saw food that had been arranged on our dinner table. My grandmother cooked so that we could eat right away. My mom noticed, at that moment, that Hazel was whimpering. My mom said it was a sign that she was going to deliver that night.



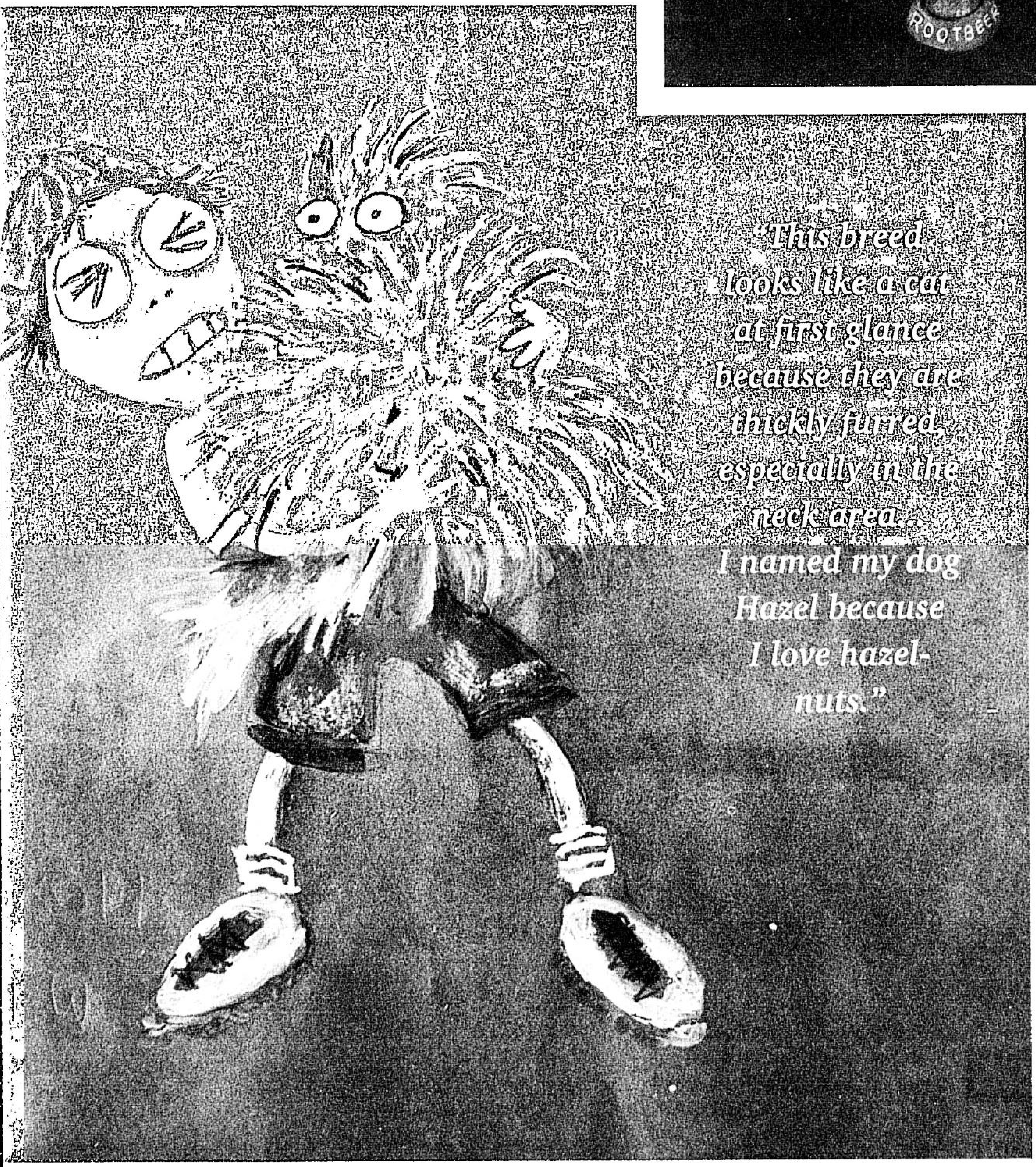
True enough, at around 11 p.m., I noticed there was something coming out of Hazel. We immediately called the friend of my dad who was a veterinarian. My dad's friend said that Hazel had to deliver by caesarian section.

My dad talked to me and explained to me what the vet was going to do. He said it would save both Hazel and her puppies. I had to agree because it was the only way the puppies would survive.

Ten to twenty minutes later, my dad's friend asked me for a box to put the puppies in. I thought they were dead. He quickly returned with the box and inside it were two live puppies.

My heart jumped for joy. The moment I saw them I felt like crying. Seeing that the puppies were all right, I immediately went to look at my drowsy dog; she looked okay.

At present, the two puppies look obese for their age. Hazel, on the other hand, is enjoying the pleasures of being a mother. She never lets her puppies out of her sight. I'm thinking of selling one puppy so that I could upgrade my computer. I now know the importance of patience. Because I waited, now I have two healthy puppies, a pretty dog and, soon, an upgraded computer.



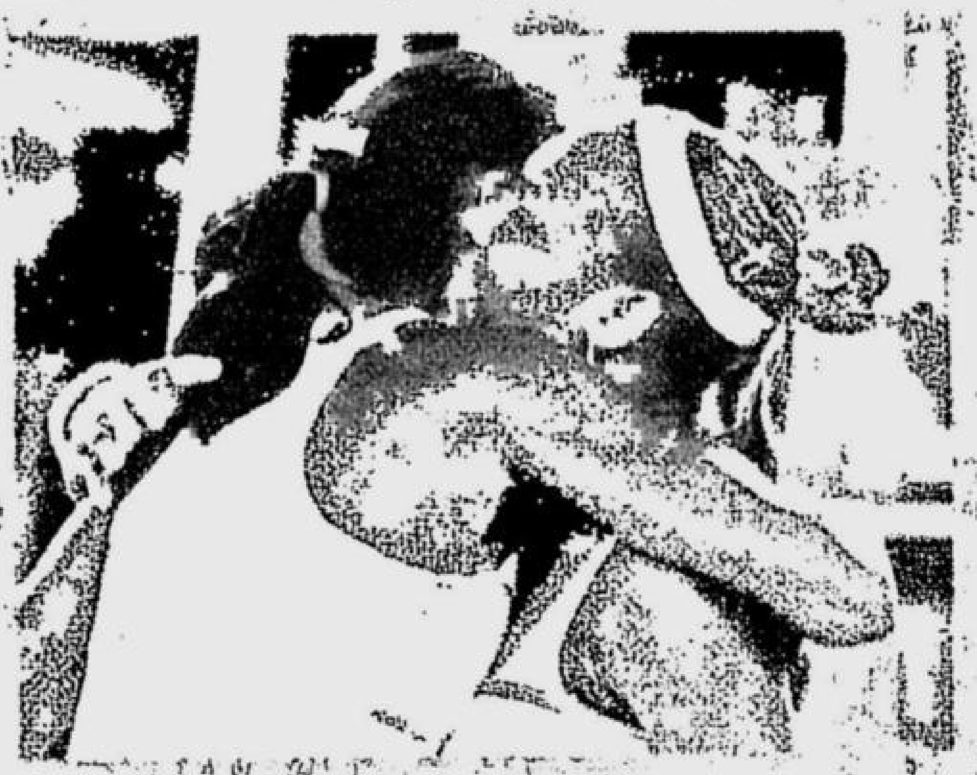
> *"This breed looks like a cat at first glance because they are thickly furred, especially in the neck area... I named my dog Hazel because I love hazelnuts."*

***Juan Miguel** or Miggy, 13, is a Grade 7 student at the Ateneo de Manila University and an avid reader of Junior Inquirer.*

***Lyra** is the creator of "Atomo and Weboy." She is a member of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan (Ang InK).*

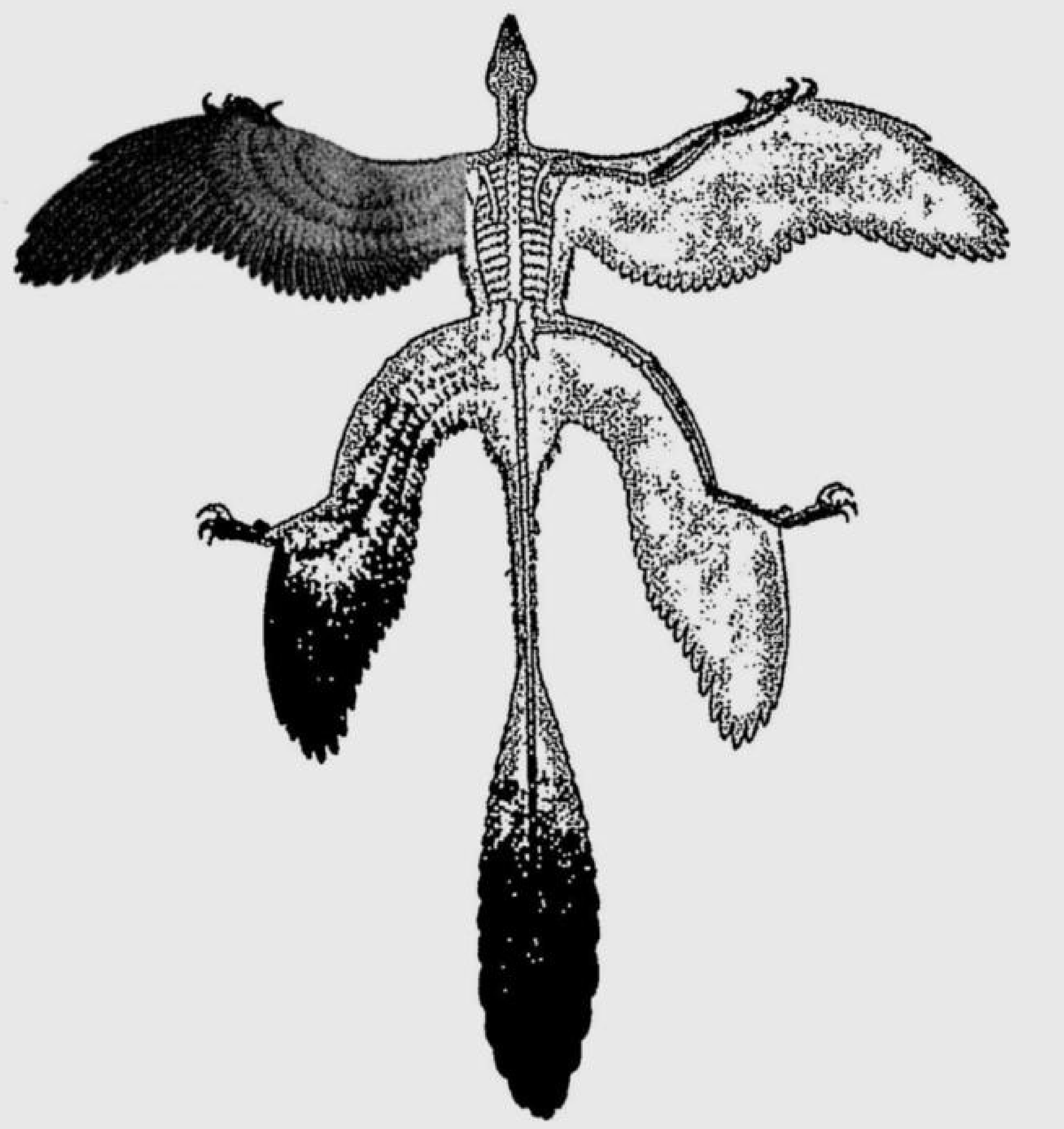
World Scope

New Mexico, USA
Texas, USA
Shanghai, China
Melbourne, Australia



Sibling Rivalry

TALK about togetherness! Serena Williams (R) had to compete against her sister, Venus, in the Australian Open. Serena won. But the gals are such good sport. Serena hugs her sister Venus after she defeated her, 7-6, 3-6, 6-4. *Reuters*



Four-Winged Dinosaur

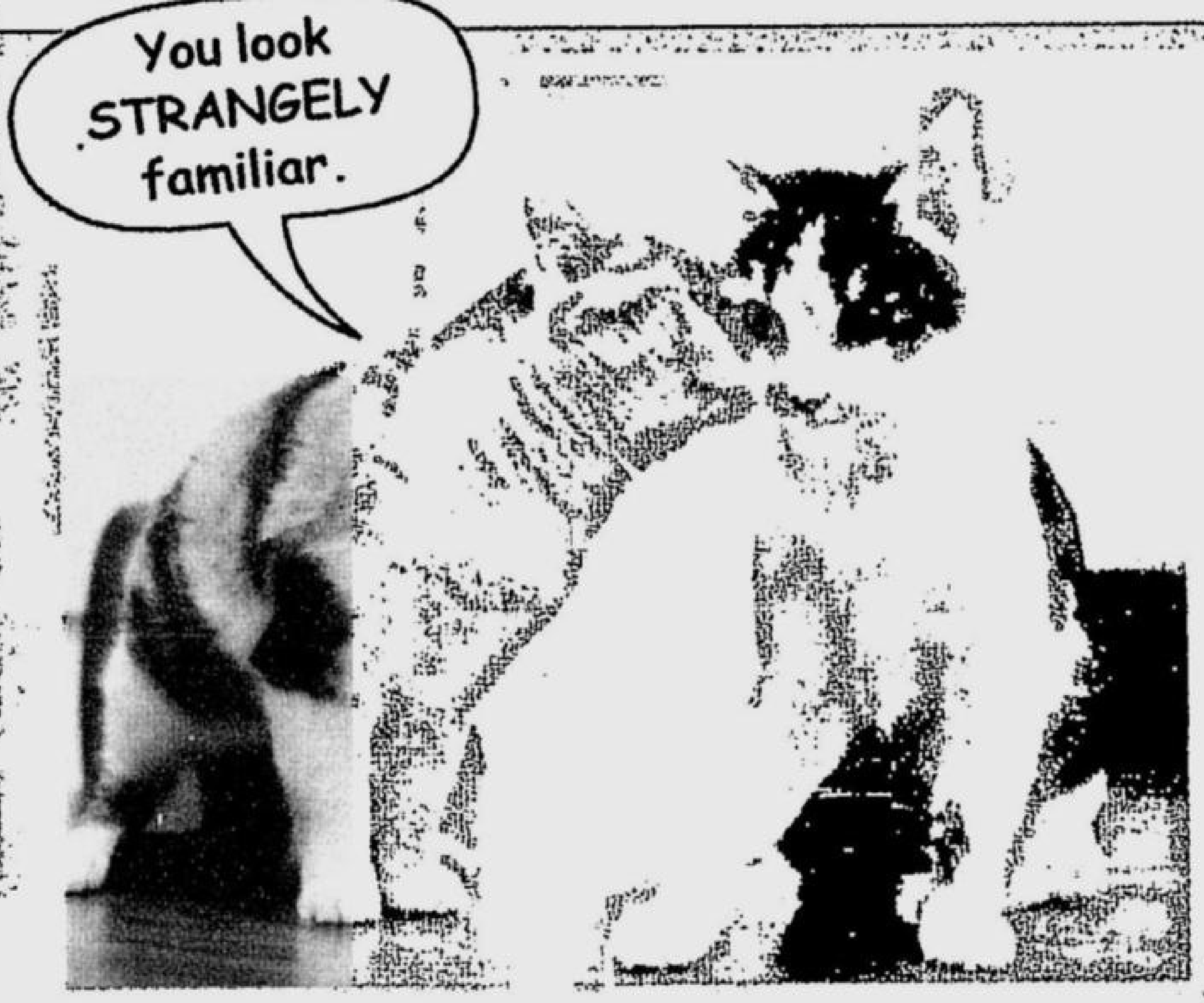
THIS is an artist's conception released by Nature Magazine of the four-winged dinosaur discovered in China. The fossils with leg feathers were discovered in northeast China. The small animal called "Microraptor gui"—in honor of Chinese paleontologist Gu Zhiwei—was about 2.5 feet long and had feathers covering its legs that were similar to the feathers in its wings. The fossil was dated from 128 million years ago. *AP*

Vampires in the US

A WHITE-WINGED vampire bat pup, that researchers are saying is the first captive birth in the United States of the rare vampire bat, is shown in Tijeras, New Mexico. A colony of the bats was rescued from the Caribbean island nation of Trinidad. The bats were being eradicated on the island so researchers worked to get the bats sent to the US where a breeding colony of the rare bird-blood-feeding bats could be started and studied. *AP*

Attack of the Soft Yellow Goats

NO, these stuffed animals are not out to rule the world. They are just plush doll goats on display in front of a shopping mall in Shanghai. The Chinese celebrated the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Goat, last Saturday. Here's a ba-a-a-ful New Year to everyone! *AFP*



"You're a copycat and I wuv you!"

RAINBOW, left, nuzzles the ear of her clone "cc," for "carbon copy," on a table at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Even though the cats share the same DNA, each uses it differently, leaving them with different markings and individual personalities. *AP*

THE LUNCH BOX

by Katrina B. Villa

WHAT IS A BOMBAY DUCK?

☑ your answer!

☐ Is it a kind of duck found only in Bombay, India?

In the 1990s, India changed the city's name from Bombay to Mumbai.

☐ Is it a kind of fish found in India?

Our planet may have up to 40,000 different species of fish!

HOLD THIS UP IN FRONT OF A MIRROR FOR THE ANSWER

A Bombay Duck is a small fish which, in India is usually salted, dried and used as a condiment. A condiment is a seasoning that accompanies food, like ketchup or soy sauce.

A MONSTER VALENTINE

Happy Valentine's, my adorable little peanut!

Valentine's Day is coming soon. Give your loved ones some monster pet names! Simply pick one word out of each row then put 'em together for a really monstrous valentine!!

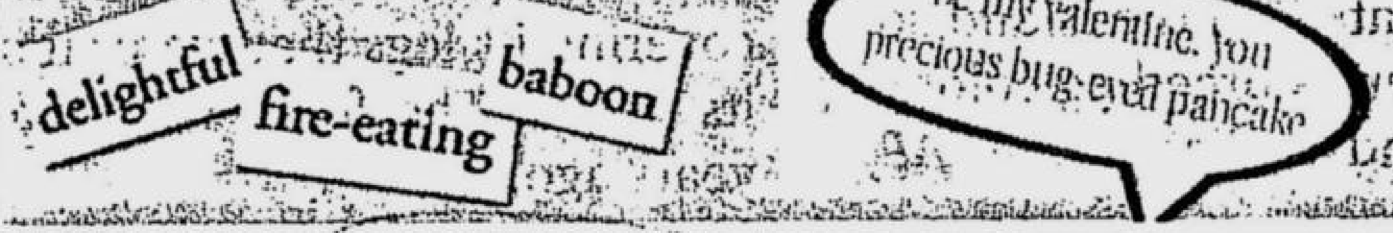
adorable | delightful | breathtaking | fabulous | precious | amazing

+

little | elastic | mouldy | fire-eating | hairy | bug-eyed

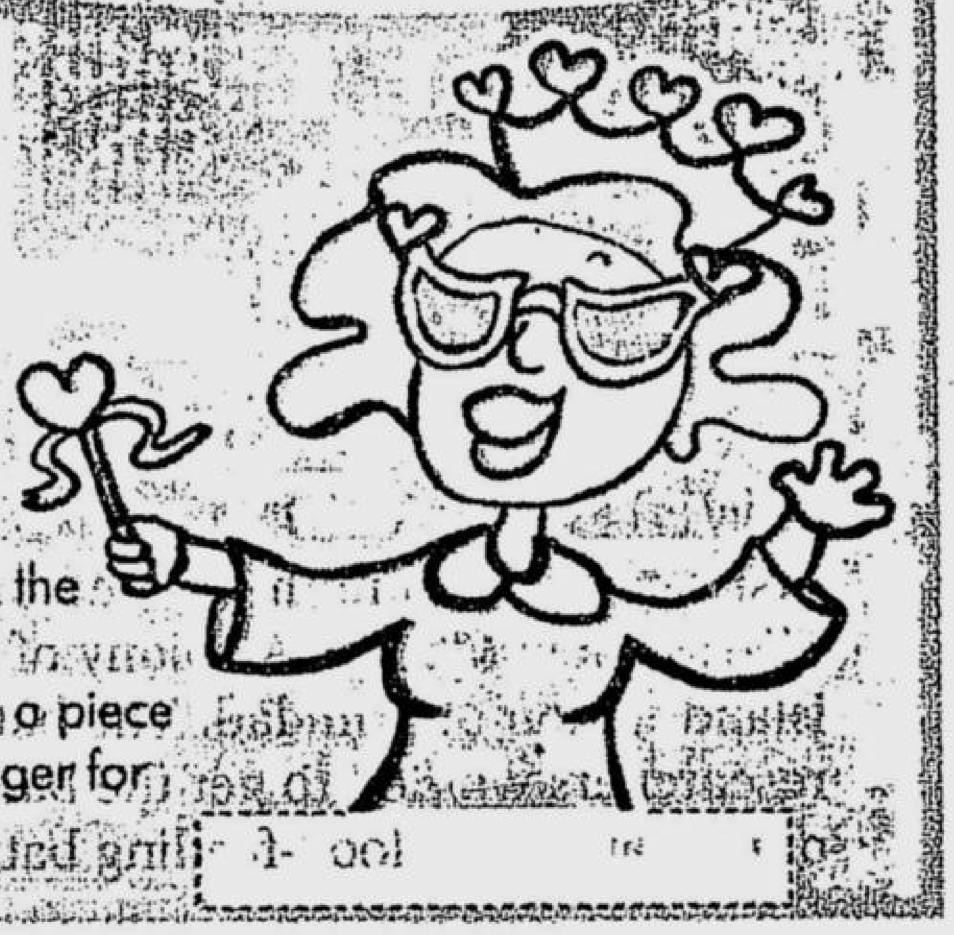
+

turnip | baboon | rodent | peanut | bumblebee | pancake


delightful
fire-eating
baboon
Be my valentine, you precious bug-eyed pancake

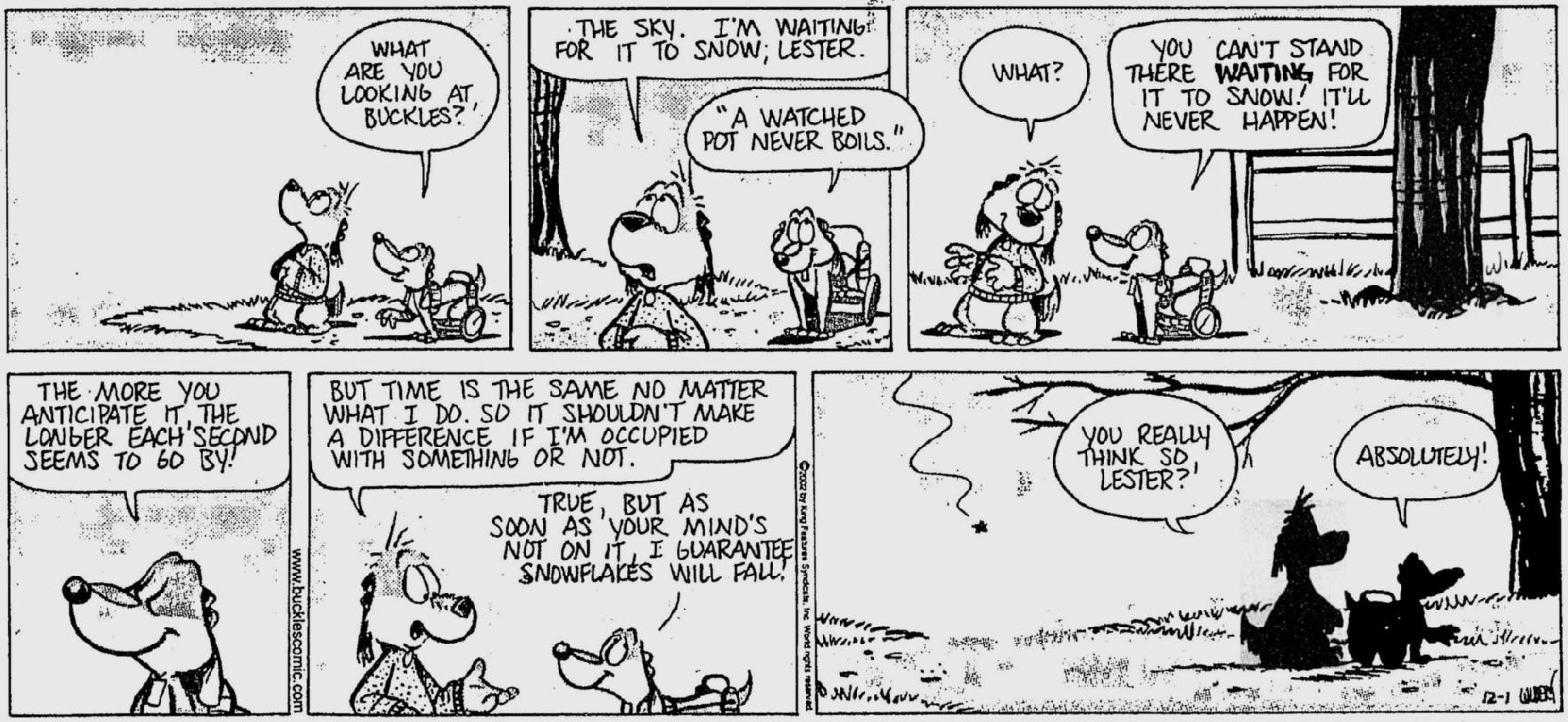
THIS FINGER PUPPET IS FOR YOU!

Simply cut it out, wrap the white strip round your finger and secure with a piece of tape. Wave your finger for some valentine's fun!



BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT, BUCKLES?
THE SKY. I'M WAITING FOR IT TO SNOW, LESTER.
"A WATCHED POT NEVER BOILS."
WHAT?
YOU CAN'T STAND THERE WAITING FOR IT TO SNOW! IT'LL NEVER HAPPEN!
THE MORE YOU ANTICIPATE IT, THE LONGER EACH SECOND SEEMS TO GO BY!
BUT TIME IS THE SAME NO MATTER WHAT I DO. SO IT SHOULDN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF I'M OCCUPIED WITH SOMETHING OR NOT.
TRUE, BUT AS SOON AS YOUR MIND'S NOT ON IT, I GUARANTEE SNOWFLAKES WILL FALL!
YOU REALLY THINK SO, LESTER?
ABSOLUTELY!
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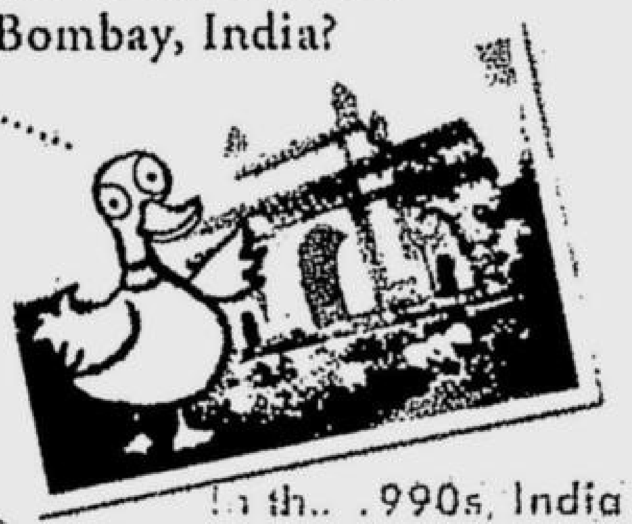

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delightful fire-eating baboon

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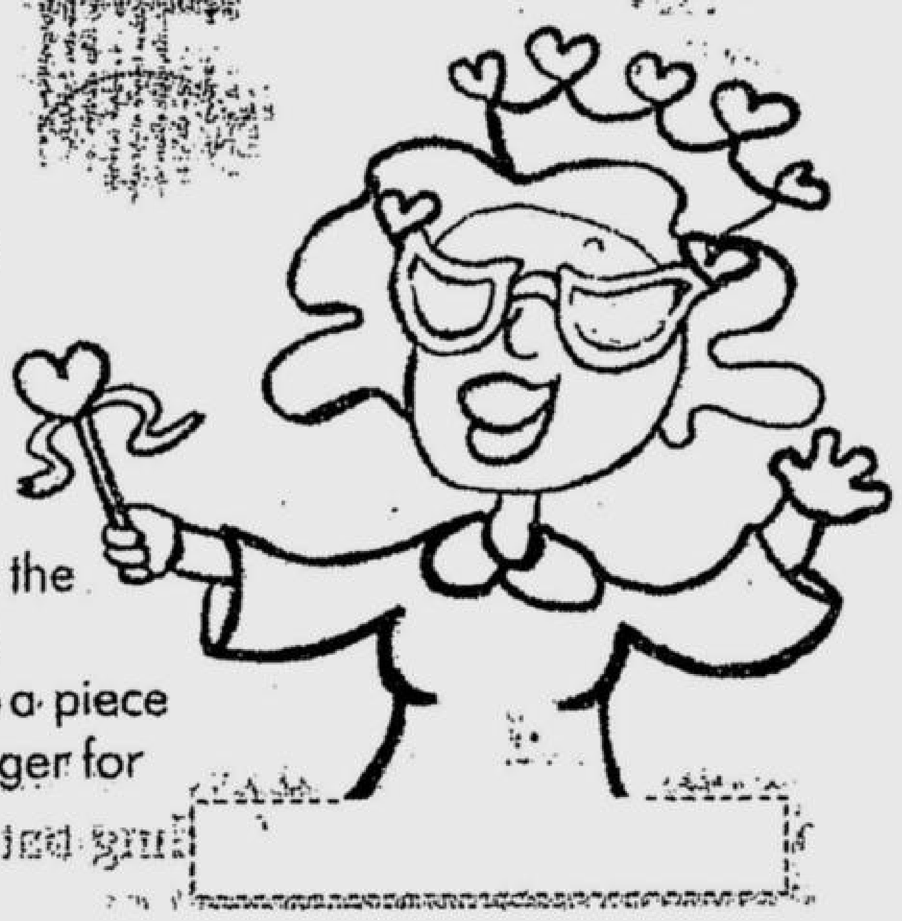

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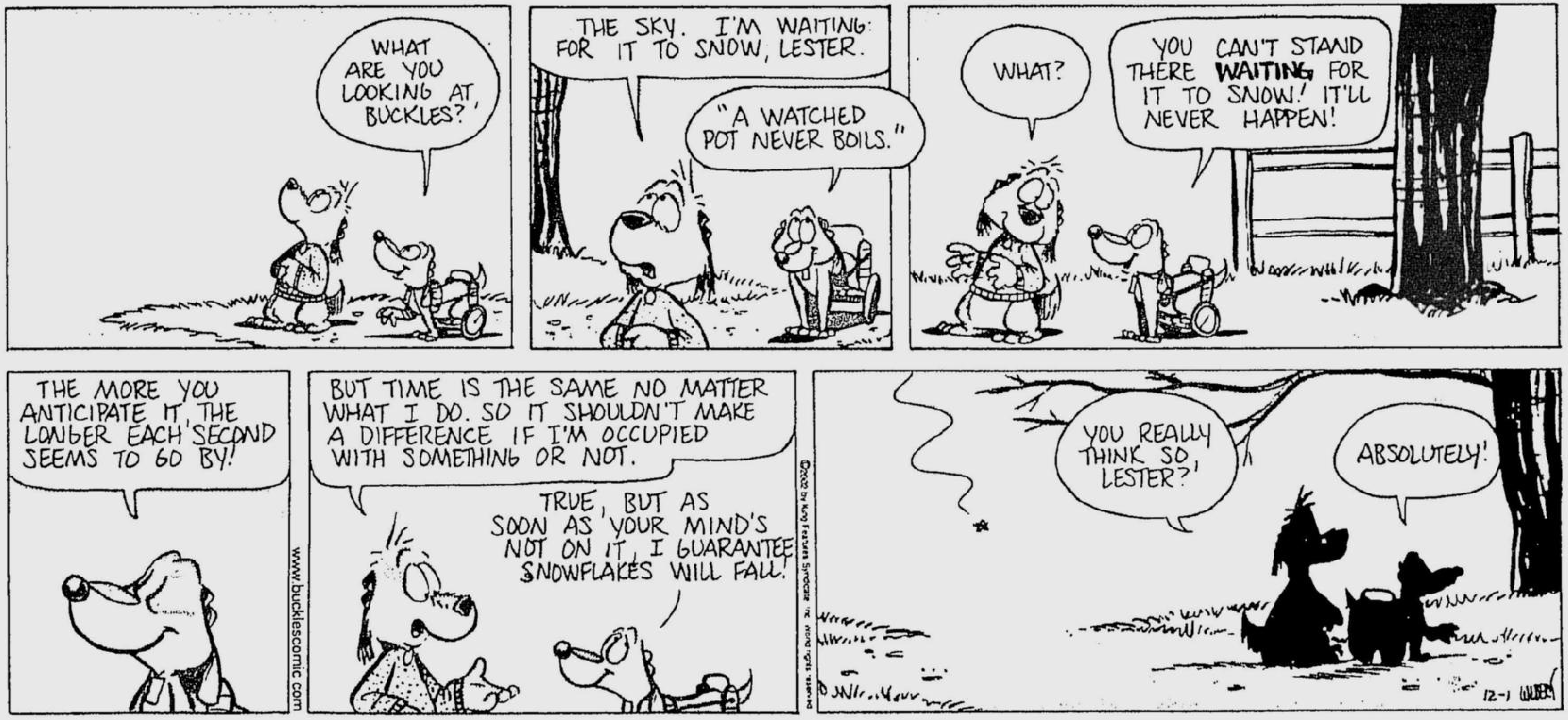
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12-1 GILBERT

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The Black Pepper Club (from page 1)

science project.

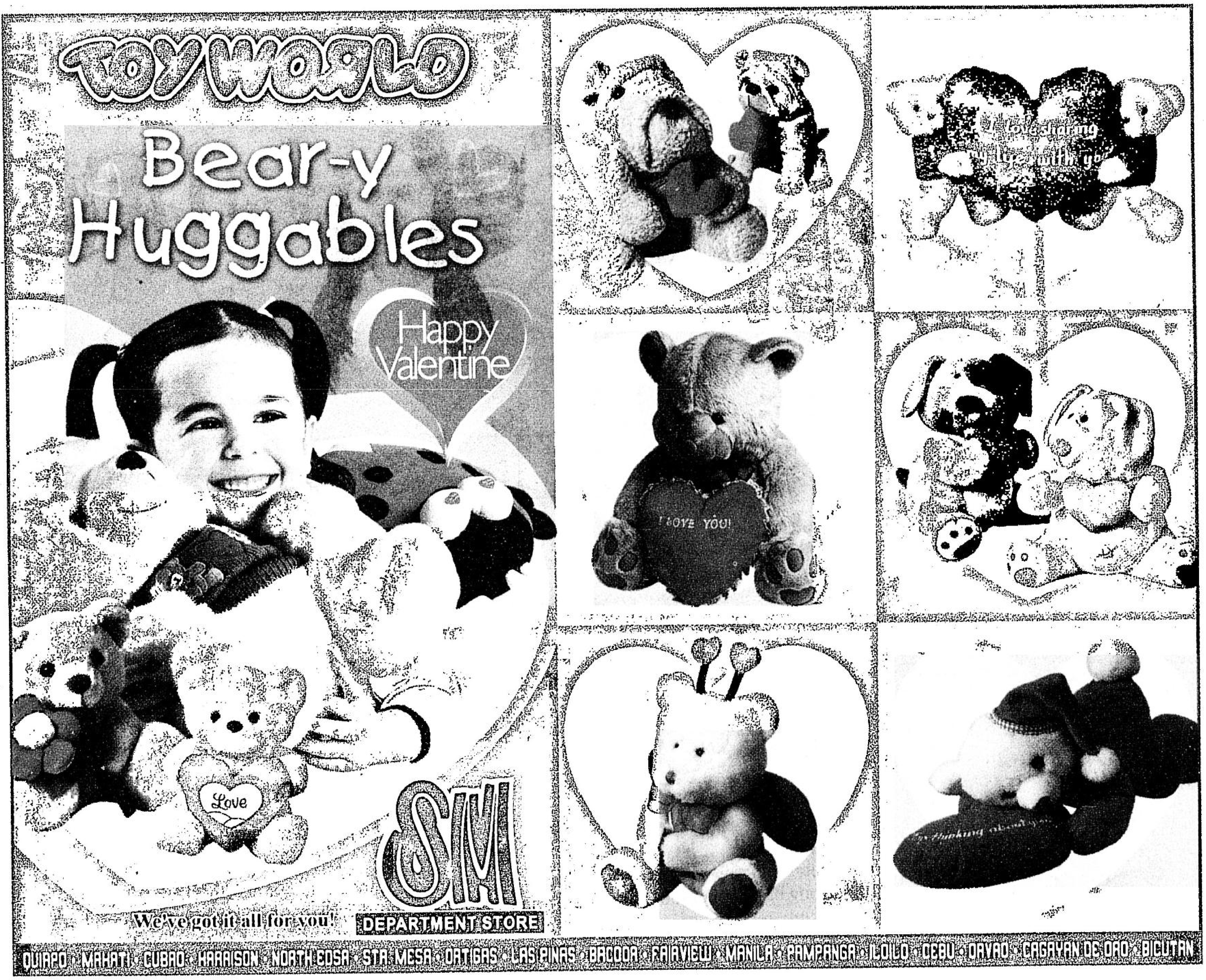
"Each house now has black pepper to earn from," said Black Pepper Club treasurer Rovi-Ann Hernandez. The 12-year-old added, "During summer, families can sell it for added income. I enjoy planting it, too."

Over 50 grade school applicants and 100 high school science clubs were screened in the Search for the Outstanding Youth Science Club for 2002. Wow, that's no small feat for the Black Pepper Club!

The other award-winning clubs were 1st runner-up Explorers Club from Maura Elementary School in Apari, Cagayan and 2nd runner-up YES Club from Southville International in Las Piñas. The Explorers have made a project of cleaning the seashore in front of their school, put up a science and technology park and planted a mini-forest. The YES Club launched a promotional campaign on environmental awareness and planted a botanical garden.

DEXTER LIRA

PEPPER in stages, from the plant to the finished product.


TOY WORLD
Bear-y Huggables
Happy Valentine
Love
I LOVE YOU!
I love sharing my life with you
I'm thinking about you
SM
We've got it all for you!
DEPARTMENT STORE
QUIAPO • MAKATI • CUBAO • HARRISON • NORTH EDSA • STA. MESA • ORTIGAS • LAS PIÑAS • BACOOR • FAIRVIEW • MANILA • PAMPANGA • ILOILO • CEBU • DAVAO • CAGAYAN DE ORO • BICUTAN